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**"THE MUSIC THAT  
WE LOVE...**

**IT'S SOMEWHERE  
BETWEEN**

**EUPHORIA**

**AND**

**MELANCHOLIA."**



# Eden

Directed by **MIA HANSEN-LØVE**

Starring **FÉLIX DE GIVRY, PAULINE ETIENNE, GRETA GERWIG**

Released **24 JULY**

**Life is an all-night dance party, but what happens when the beat finally stops? Mia Hansen-Løve's extraordinary fourth feature hints at the answer.**

**L**ife demands we choose a path and walk it. How fast or hard or far we go is the magical variable. It's the process of bristling against the stimuli of the world, taking in the influences of other people, negotiating the topography of fashion and politics and succumbing to the strange, magnetising lure of desire. It's about being constantly prompted to question whether the path you've chosen was the correct one. And this isn't us proclaiming from on high, merely second-guessing the intentions of the brilliant French director Mia Hansen-Løve, whose latest masterpiece, *Eden*, plays doleful existential ennui to a soundtrack of fluttering 120 bpm floor-fillers.

Her fourth feature opens on an unassuming, bright young man, Paul Vallée (Félix de Givry), as he emerges somewhat frazzled from a docked submarine at twilight – a fairy tale setup if ever there was one. He slips awkwardly through an overgrown glade, side-stepping the tingling, pan-European revellers as if he's in possession of some miraculous piece of information on which he alone must contemplate. The vessel is an improvised rave venue, and the muffled musical siren call can be heard in the middle distance. Or, this could well be the background noise inside Paul's own head. He props up against a tree, lights a cigarette and glances skyward. An animated bird loops through the canopy and, within an instant, is gone. This is Paul's epiphany. It's entirely unexplained and wholly beautiful, something only he sees and perhaps the kind of private oracle which sets lives in motion. The ensuing film is about Paul trying to prove to himself that what he saw was real.

Hansen-Løve's previous three features were all ripped from raw personal experience, and they all in some way picked apart death, grief and the elusive possibility of renewal. She has said that these films – which include 2007's *Tout est pardonné*, 2009's *Father of My Children* and 2012's *Goodbye, First Love* – form a loose trilogy. Where the first two dealt with death in a more literal guise, *Goodbye, First Love* looked at the death of love, with an intense formative relationship being abruptly extinguished, though its warm embers burn on in the mind of its hyper-sensitive heroine. *Eden*, which is directly inspired by the life of Hansen-Løve's brother, Sven, who co-wrote the screenplay with her, assumes a near-identical dramatic arc to *Goodbye, First Love*, only replacing the central heterosexual romance with a love affair between a man and his music. And music, we discover, can be a harsh mistress.

Paul yearns to be a DJ, though he aims to retain a sense of musical purism – his playlists are formed entirely of early '90s "French touch" garage music. Ascendent sub-genres interest him none, and his heart is given over to a sound which during a radio interview he defines as being the exact mid-point between the euphoric and the melancholic – a handy double-edged descriptor which also nails the gently vacillating tone of the film at large. Paul's journey melds personal crisis, fleeting prosperity and alternative social history in a way that's suggestive of one of Martin Scorsese's era-bridging bildungsroman such as *Goodfellas* or *Casino*. Hansen-Løve, though, is less interested in explaining why things happen, and is more open to being tickled and surprised by random inertia.






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**“It’s an unbearably sad film, stern in its refusal to acquiesce to motivational banalities such as doing what you love or being the best you can be.”**

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She offers no lessons in *Eden*; just observations, the narrative ellipses hold guard against didacticism. And this isn’t a way of shirking cinematic responsibility in what some might see as a search for pre-packaged profundity. Rich emotions are made manifest through minor details, and where Hansen-Løve’s intricate and intuitive construction mode might evade conspicuous payoffs, it’s the things that are not happening and the people who are not there that are often the most important.



History and the passing of time in *Eden* are presented as entirely experiential, and while the film does roughly adhere to a marketing synopsis which infers a musical biopic covering some 20 years of this specific “scene”, it’s much more than a series of carefully mounted Wiki-touchstones. This granular view of collective perception recalls the quietly revolutionary films of Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien, such as 1989’s *A City of Sadness* or 1993’s *The Puppetmaster*, both real stories told from imagined perspectives. A professed admirer of Hou, Hansen-Løve has herself produced a film about a single person passing through history, not about history itself – its contingent ructions are felt rather than seen. In terms of its countercultural subject matter, *Eden* is almost a Western remake of Hou’s 2001 film *Millennium Mambo*, itself smitten and inspired by the hypnotic qualities of house music and of lives lived by night. The heady power of nostalgia is wielded in a way which latches on to the import of feeling the moment, not recognising its significance: how it feels to listen to music; how it feels to play music to other people; how it feels to walk into a club; how it feels to be chasing a dream.



It's not without its pop levity, mind you. Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter (aka Daft Punk) appear (played by actors) in an early house party scene, a small-scale lark which sees the pair shuffle awkwardly behind the decks then nonchalantly drop their wall-shaking single 'Da Funk' to a rapturous response. (Paul is in the other room at the time.) It's an amusing scene, and arguably Hansen-Løve's only concession to this kind of romantic you-had-to-be-there mythologising, often the sole constituent of most Hollywood music bios. Otherwise, its music selections are a model of discernment and from-the-source insider knowledge. They are carefully placed over the action, but rarely beat-matched to it.

*Eden* is also fully attuned to the notion that we can't help but gauge our own happiness against that of the people who surround us. Paul has a brief fling with an American author played by Greta Gerwig who flits back to New York from Paris one night leaving a Dear John on his doorstep. Years later, at the height of his success, Paul visits her while in the US for a DJing engagement at Brooklyn's PS1. He sees her settled with a new partner (Brady Corbet, who seems to be on a mission to cameo in as many foreign language films as is humanly possible) and heavily pregnant. Whether Paul takes stock of this moment and sees it as a feasible life juncture for his own relationship with the one woman he really connects with, Louise (Pauline Etienne), is left open. Hansen-Løve could well have placed this scene here as a way to emphasise Paul's impermeable connection to his chosen metier, that normalcy is not yet something he understands as being attainable.

The Biblical connotations of the title refer to Paul eventually renouncing the pleasure of music for the knowledge of survival. It's an unbearably

sad film, stern in its refusal to acquiesce to motivational banalities such as doing what you love or being the best you can be. The world shows no quarter to those unwilling to roll with its hard punches. As the market for "French touch" garage dwindles, so does Paul's professional prospects. His staunch unwillingness to take stock and start anew see him left alone, with one agonising late twist seeing him discover an alternative, possibly more stable future which, at the crucial moment, he was deemed too immature to be offered. It would be easy to come out of *Eden* feeling that you've just received a lesson in cautionary fatalism, being reminded that everything we hold dear will die in our arms. Life gives you lemons, you make lemonade, and then one day, the lemons expire. Yet everything hangs on the film's very final moments, and at the lowest ebb, Hansen-Løve spectacularly turns things around with a Robert Creeley poem called 'The Rhythm' which alludes to life as a cyclical sequence of deaths and rebirths. Only as the screen finally fades are we assured that Paul really did see that bird. **DAVID JENKINS**

**ANTICIPATION.** *Director Mia Hansen-Løve has yet to put a frame out of place.*

5

**ENJOYMENT.** *Eden makes it four for four. A remarkable film which drums to its own beat.*

5

**IN RETROSPECT.** *As great as everything she's made before, and possibly even a little better.*

5

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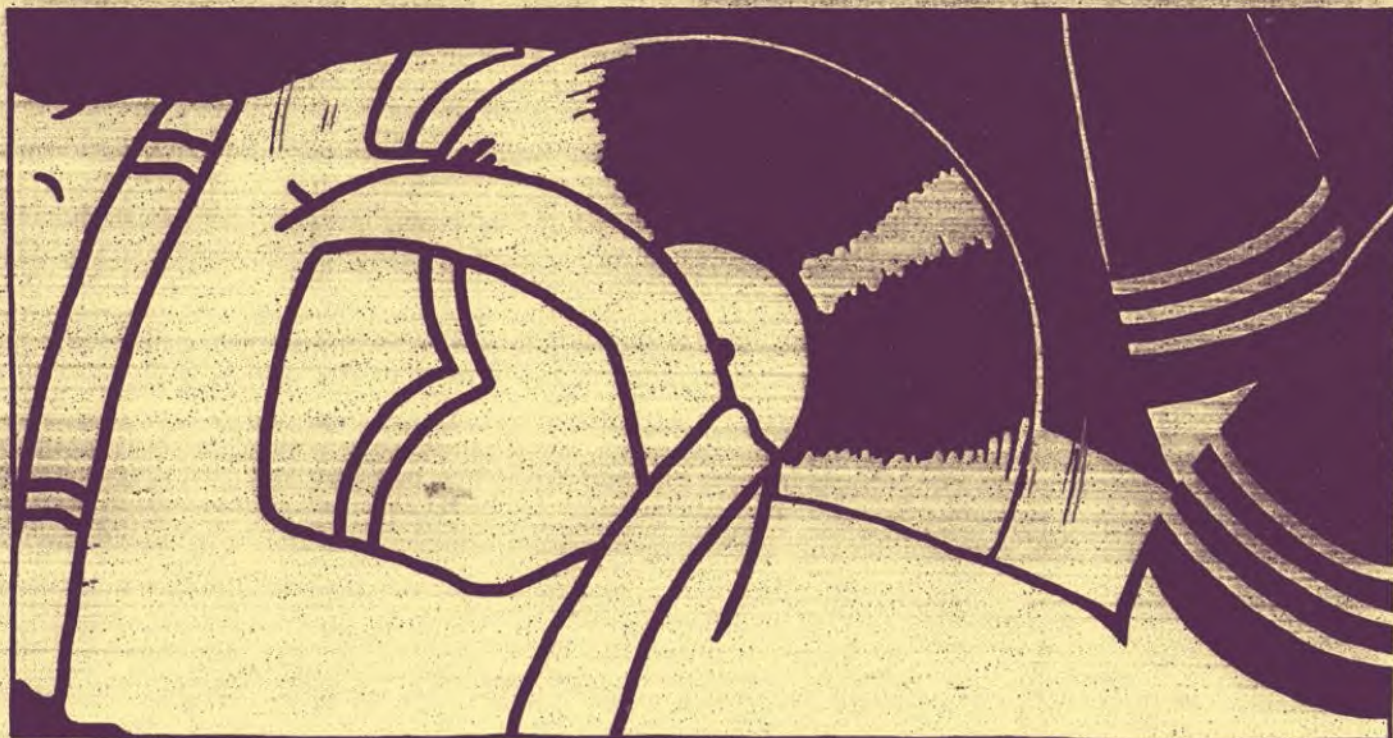


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## **FEATURE CONTENTS**

### **14-18 Invisible Touch**

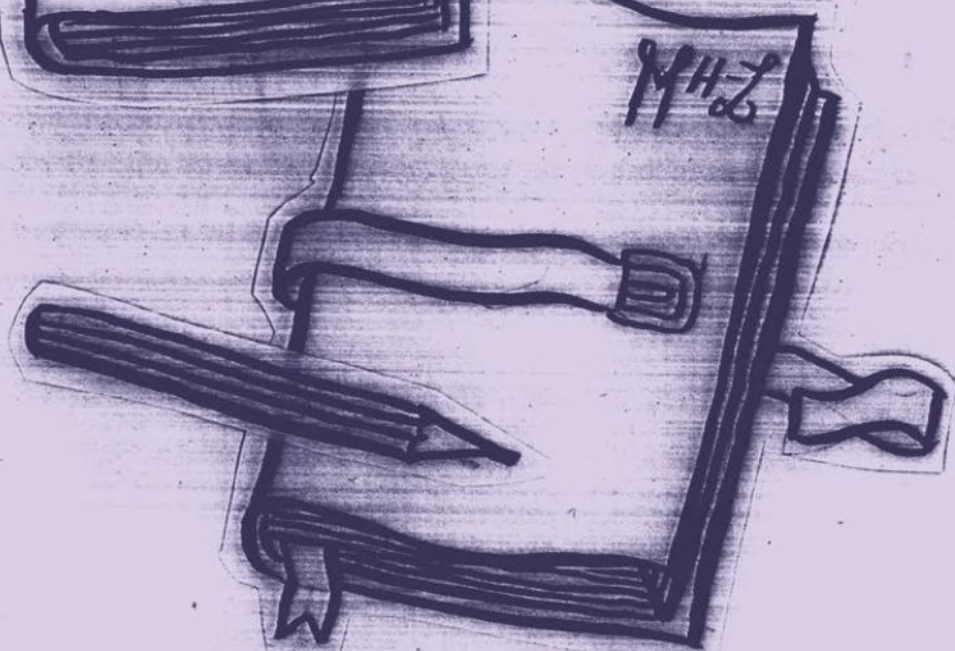
**French director Mia Hansen-Love discusses the intricacies of making *LWLes* cover film *Eden*, a task which involved her extracting her DJ brother's memories from his (slightly) drug-addled brain.**

### **20-55 It Felt Like Love**

**A compendium containing 50 admissions of love, written to a select handful of some of the greatest female filmmakers working around the globe today.**

### **36-47 Cheat Sheet**

**A handy pocket guide to 100 essential films made by female film directors which we advise you keep on your person at all times.**



# INVI- SIBLE

WORDS BY DAVID JENKINS. ILLUSTRATION BY LAURÈNE BOGLIO

With her fourth feature, *Eden*, French director Mia Hansen-Løve places herself among the most consistently impressive and distinctive artists working today. *LWLies* met her to discover how moviemaking can be an act of pure personal expression.

# TOUCH

# M I A

In architectural terms, Mia Hansen-Løve builds movies on lop-sided ground. And the structures she produces are never perfect geometric shapes which slot comfortably into the skyline. As a student she studied German and specialised in philosophy, though the world caught its first glimpse of her at age of 17 through a small role in Olivier Assayas' 1998 film, *Late August, Early September*. Less than 10 years later she had arrived with her directorial debut, the raw family saga *Tout Est Pardonné* which introduced a yen for depicting life's random realities over compartmentalising drama in order to dovetail with convention. Two years later she set Cannes aflame with her devastating follow up, *The Father of My Children*, a story which was inspired by the real-life film producer Humbert Balsan who, in 2005, took his own life. It's a special film, as its "climax" sits at the dead centre of the runtime, allowing Hansen-Løve to examine the fallout in as much detail as she does the setup. Hansen-Løve's 2011 film *Goodbye, First Love* cemented her status as a master of intuitive and unsentimental filmmaking, presenting a girl coming to terms with the passing of a whirlwind formative romance. Her latest, *Eden*, co-opts the life of her brother, Sven, a French house DJ who spun and snorted his way into penury. Félix de Givry plays Sven's disheveled onscreen avatar, Paul.

**LWLies: How close are the events in *Eden* to the reality of your brother's life?** Hansen-Løve: Very close. My brother has said 100 per cent. It's probably not the case for me, as when you write a film it instantly becomes fiction. There is a selection process. There are things you say, things you don't. It's a perception of events. It's about reconstruction. So it's extremely close to my perception of what my brother's life is about, what it is, how it feels. It was exciting to write. But it was also funny discovering that Sven had forgotten so much. Maybe because of the drugs. There were some memories that I was recalling better from his own life. Girlfriends he'd completely forgotten about.

**When the events of the film were happening, did you feel there was something cinematic about them? Or was it only with hindsight you saw it?** No, I never had any idea. I was too young. When I started to go to my brother's parties I was 13. He was working as a DJ in a bar in Bastille and people were just pushing the tables to the side to dance. It wasn't meant to be a club. At the same time there were great house clubs popping up, like The Queen, where we used to go. I didn't know I wanted to be a filmmaker at that point. I never felt I was observing things. First, I started writing alone, but then I realised I needed Sven as I just had tons of questions I had to ask him about his memories. It was quite an effort to get him to remember events, but he did recall the feelings and the emotions. People and places were all

very foggy. I too have a very bad memory, and I sometimes think that's why I make films. As a way to reconstruct the ruins of the past.

**How did Sven contribute?** I wrote the structure to the film on my own, and the more it went on, the more I felt how stimulating and interesting it would be for me to include scenes that he would write. He spent so much time in clubs with this same group of friends. No-one could capture these scenes as well as he could. I was always with this group, but I was a much more solitary person. It's a way of living where you're never alone.

**Was Sven okay with you wanting to make a movie about his life?** Yeah, it was very simple. We've always been very close. He knows that I make films inspired by the people I know. So it wasn't a big surprise. When I started to tell him about it, I wasn't even sure I was going to do it. Early on, it all seemed too difficult. And it was. To finance, it was a nightmare. I wasn't so sure. I felt there was something great to do that was historic, about our generation. I had the feeling that I could make a film about our generation that was totally relevant if we focused on this story. Especially because it wasn't a success story. It made me feel the film could be more universal. I realised no-one has done a movie about house music in France. No-one is taking it seriously. No-one is filming in nightclubs in a realistic way. Filmmakers all have their club scene, but nobody makes a

whole film in one. At that point he was broke and depressed and he was trying to start a new life writing short stories. And he actually got published. It was tough. He was rejecting his own story as a DJ. He saw it as a way to have a new perspective on his story and find a new energy and desire that he had lost.

Did you speak to any other characters involved in the story? A lot of the boys are still Sven's friends. They were involved in the project. Especially the one played by Vincent Macaigne who has long hair who plays a hypochondriac. The

about the melancholy as something I wanted to show. It was just there, as it's there in pretty much everything I do. Later, especially after I or Sven wrote it, the scene in the radio station where they talk about the music and Paul says about the MK song that he loves it because it's a mixture of euphoria and melancholy. I only then realised I was talking about my own style. It's interesting because it made me understand the connection between my films and the music. You might think that there's not much of a connection between the films I've seen before and garage music - they're two different worlds.

# WANKS

real guy is one of my brother's best friends. He's a radio presenter, and it's weird because he interviewed us about the film. My films navigate from fiction to reality, and I feel that in my life. My films are influenced by reality, but my life is influenced by my films. Sometimes I have the feeling I make films in order to create some kind of confusion in my life between fiction and reality. I need this confusion. It helps me feel accomplished. It's crucial for me. I have the feeling with this film that I went so far in creating this confusion that I still feel like I'm living in this world. All the things that I've taken from my life and my brother's life to build *Eden*, now it's given back to me in real life. I feel like I am stuck in film just as Paul feels like he's stuck in house music.

There's a sequence where Paul describes the music he loves as a mixture of euphoria and melancholy, which seems to also speak about your style of cinema. I think I became aware of this juxtaposition in the process of making this film. When I started writing, thinking about it, the melancholy came first. It all started from the situation of my brother, which was really bad. But still, when I started working on the first draft and constructing the story, it was about a successful person. It's not that it was all about happiness and joy. But I wasn't thinking

And ultimately I think that one of the reasons I connected with this music is not only personal history and the fact my brother was involved in it, which of course is crucial, but it's also the fact that you have this mixture. And that's the one thing I connect with. You find it in the music of Daft Punk.

Is this a pessimistic movie? No. I think it's melancholic, but pessimistic? I don't know. With this character, I don't see him as bad or good. But he had to do this long detour to find himself. It's because he's been through that and touched the bottom of it and experienced that world as intensively as he has that ultimately he will be able to write a book about himself. I don't see it as a downer. It's time lost maybe? But Proust's 'A la Recherche du Temps Perdu' makes for a great book, so... Losing time is precious. I see a lot of poetry in it. When I say poetry, I don't mean writing. I mean life. There is nothing more beautiful than this loss. I care for that. I notice that for some people, probably people of our parents' generation, for them all of this is very vain as they don't see how deep or how strong the relationship with the music is. It's nothing. It's the void. Because he has no children and no girlfriend and ends up broke and alone, I've noticed that from a friend of mine who is slightly older, he says it's all in vain. But

you could say he's fragile, he doesn't know what he wants, he's not a hero in the more classical meaning of heroes. Still, for me, he had to live like that. And I don't see why his life would be any less interesting or essential than any other life. It will give him the keys to literature.

Could he have the same experience with literature? I don't think so. Maybe he will make mistakes and get lost again, but he will produce something. Something that stays. The thing about the music is that, in the end, he has nothing to show for it.

As someone who writes and directs, when do you know there's something you can make a film about? I think it has to do with the certitude or the conviction that there is a film to be made. It's a matter of relationships - the relationship that I have with the characters. More precisely, the emotion I have when I think of the presence of these characters. I don't have to know these characters, but I have to be connected to them. Actually, the character could be a woman, a man, a child, an old lady. It's the character that makes me excited about making movies. And I haven't really talked about this, but I really think there's something erotic involved in that process. Or sensual. It's not just theoretical. It's instinctive. I have to have an attraction to a presence.

When you have thought of these characters, do you write down descriptions or is that something you keep in your head? I never do that. My greatest fear is that a producer asks me to write a treatment. It's never happened so far. I do have the feeling that I control what the character is like. I'm not a writer to the point where I could write novels instead of films. I know the musicality of these people, and it would be tough for me to rationalise them.

When you talk about these characters to the actors you've hired, how much detail do you go into? I'm not so specific. I've never really worked with actors who think you should know the entire history of a character before you play them, and I don't really like that. The truth of the character would come entirely from

what happens in front of the camera - how they talk, how they move, how they develop a rhythm. Something that's hard to define. I'm a director who requires a lot of takes. I've never really had to help build the psychology of a character, but I do help to develop it. I'm about to shoot a film with Isabelle Huppert this summer and she understands perfectly what the character is about. I don't have to explain anything to her. You know when you buy a play and there are pages that explain how you should dramatise it, well we don't need that. Also, it's true that for me, half of what the character is about comes from the actor.

How do you describe your style? I don't think I could, especially speaking in English. It's crucial for me, but typically my style is not obvious. I mean, the way I make movies, I generally don't want the style to be identifiable. I like it to be transparent, but I know that it can't be because transparency in film doesn't exist. I never want people watching my films to think, 'Oh, this is a great shot.' I never felt like I have anything to prove to the audience. I place all the importance to the things in the frame, not the frame itself. I want to be invisible. Basically, I'm open to a lot of different things. I'm not the kind of director who would make a film using six shots or with a handheld camera. I like the idea that my style is homogenous. It's not something that's easy to define.

What do you think of your early films? I don't re-watch them, but I sometimes see the beginning and the end when I'm attending screenings. It's very hard for me to have a critical view on them, not because I think everything I do is great, but because they're so important to me. They're a part of me. Not liking them would be not liking myself. And that would be insane. I don't even think of them as films. They're like my hand. Of course I think that there are shots that I would have done differently, and it's good for a filmmaker to constantly want to evolve. The reason I make films is that it's a way for me to harvest my own memories. With all my films, with all their weakness, they are true testimonies of who I was.





VĚRA CHYTILOVÁ'S

## Fruit of Paradise

This surreal retelling of the Adam and Eve myth screens on MUBI for 30 days.

When tenacious Czech iconoclast Věra Chytilová passed in March of 2014, there was a jolt to the collective memory about the vast import of her cinematic legacy. Chytilová's renown as a filmmaker existed largely outside of her home country, her righteous indigence towards entrenched inequality often running counter to state censorship laws and popular tastes. Many of her films, especially those she made in the '70s and '80s, have been hard to come by, the only one that remained attainable in some form or another was her now-classic second feature, 1966's *Daisies*. Chytilová's films often spoke of very specific political problems within Czechoslovakia, such as the cultural blight of high-rise living (1980's *Panelstory*), medical malpractice (1977's *The Apple Game*) and the ties between capitalism and misogyny (1998's *Traps*). *Daisies*, however, comes across as a more universally-primed shot of spirited outrage, a kaleidoscopic, anarcho-feminist tract in which two young women assert their femininity on to society in the most violent way imaginable.

Its astonishing follow-up, *Fruit of Paradise* from 1970, saw Chytilová experimenting in a different way, this time opting for poetic symbolism

over mad-eyed polemic. The film retells the story of Adam and Eve as a countercultural reverie, with men and women frolicking in a woodland clearing as Eve rebuffs the advances of a wily, bearded Devil.

In many ways, *Daisies* is the gateway drug for *Fruit of Paradise*, and you might even see it as a more mature film (even though *Daisies* is pointedly immature). Both are magical examples of what can be achieved with film when clichéd characterisations and dull three-act structures are entirely done away with to make way for a pure and playful form of cinematic invention. Each new scene in *Fruit of Paradise* offers a surprise, whether that relates to the actions of the protagonists, the placing of the camera, the use of colour, the distance the camera is from the subjects or the free-form use of sound and music. This is perhaps Chytilová's most nakedly dramatic and moving work, which is strange considering she does everything in her power to give the audience what she wants, not what they think they want. It's a gamble that pays off, enchantingly.

*Fruit of Paradise* is available on MUBI for 30 days from 7 July

**LWLies and MUBI present a series of movie Doubles – live events and 30 day online streams which highlights some of our favourite movies and directors from across the globe. Head to [littlewhitelies.co.uk](http://littlewhitelies.co.uk) and [mubi.com](http://mubi.com) for more info.**

# IT FELT *like* Lonely

HOW DOES IT FEEL?  
TO HAVE ALL THE BEAUTIFUL  
FEELINGS IN THE  
WORLD ROLLED UP  
IN ONE FABULOUS  
CHRISTMAS PRESENT!  
IT'S LIKE  
SUMMER AND  
SNOW...

WHO NEEDS A  
MAN WHEN  
I HAVE  
A CAMERA



# WOMEN IN FILM

In celebration of

# 50

great female filmmakers  
working across the globe  
today, a crew of *LWLies'*  
contributors describe  
the exact moment when  
deep admiration turned to  
intense passion.

Words by

Ela Bittencourt, Jordan Cronk, David Ehrlich,  
Rebecca Ellis, Simran Hans, Glenn Heath Jr,  
David Jenkins, Mehelli Modi, Sophie Monks Kaufman,  
Peter Labuza, Clarisse Loughrey,  
Katherine McLaughlin, Adam Nayman, Nick Pinkerton,  
Kiva Reardon, Justine Smith, Adam Woodward



# Lynne 1 Ramsay

Scottish director Lynne Ramsay has constantly thrown me for a loop. But it's always been my fault. Upon watching her first feature, 1999's bruising and sublime coming-of-age, *Ratcatcher*, in college I felt certain a dynamic new voice had been born. It harboured similar qualities to many of the neorealist films I was watching at the time in class: non-professional actors, long takes and location shooting were all part of her process. This wasn't just punishing poverty porn; ideas seeped from these cinematic pores.

Yet Ramsay's approach to the gritty material felt far more kinetic than its Italian forebears. There was danger in every shot, a sense that the world could collapse at a moment's notice. The story of a young Scottish boy learning to cope with a changing tide in his family made the type of impression that lasts a lifetime. Intense, life-changing, dialogue-driven scenes developed slowly, and then would culminate in an explosion of violence or sudden loss. All of my bearings were thrown to the wind.

At this point I hadn't taken the time to watch her short films, the pummeling experimental prison drama *Kill the Day* or the slightly more lyrical road trip oddity, *Holy Cow*, both released in 1996. I'm not sure either would have prepared me for what was next.



...ularity among the critical community where certain cultural commentators like to take ownership of movie directors. That because they loved them first, their love matters more. They take ownership. And, hell, we've all done it. Seeing Kelly Reichardt's *Old Joy* in 2006 was a slowburn revelation for me, a "small" movie that focused on nothing as a way to talk about everything. It's a structurally loose, walking-and-talking movie which had in fact been engineered with the utmost precision and purpose.

When I approached Ramsay's *Morvern Callar* in 2002, I was not even remotely equipped for this tour de force. At this point in my studies I was under the impression that most directors tended to make the same films time and again, with similar tones and points of view. Ramsay shattered these expectations with her striking and enigmatic adaptation of Alan Warner's novel about a woman played by Samantha Morton, who decides to publish her lover's novel after he's committed suicide. The ghost of Antonioni had crossed my path and I didn't even recognise it.

Much later I revisited *Morvern Callar*, convinced I had misread it or just wasn't ready for the kind of ambiguous statement on modern relationships. This second screening confirmed that all of my suspicions were correct: I was ill equipped to properly digest a masterpiece of misdirection and melancholy. It's a film that provides never-ending psychological mysteries, often inspired by Morton's freedom and bravery.

In 2011, I attended the Cannes Film Festival for the first time. Ramsay's most recent film (at time of writing), *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, played in the competition. It was one of my most anticipated that year. Much to my chagrin, the critical reception was chilly at best; I defended the film as best I could, citing Ramsay's masterful use of colour in telling the story of a mother grappling with her son's evil actions.

Nonetheless, now I feel that maybe my instincts had been deceptive yet. Perhaps it's time I revisit Ramsay again and see if my aesthetic compass has straightened or grown more askew. Either way, Ramsay is the kind of expressive filmmaker that splatters every emotion across the frame in grand fashion, and for that she will always warrant my undying attention.

Glenn Heath Jr

# Kelly Reichardt 2

I recall excitedly reading reviews out of Cannes of her 2008 follow-up, *Wendy and Lucy*, thinking that her formative greatness had now been set in amber and we had another master in our midst. Eventually seeing the film at a London press screening, I was reduced to a clammy mulch, blindsided by what I had just seen. As with *Old Joy*, this new work was a collaboration with Portland-based author Jon Raymond, and it told of a young woman (Michelle Williams) travelling across America who suddenly loses her sole companion: a dog named Lucy. It harks directly back to the unglamorous neorealist purism of Vittorio De Sica's *Umberto D*, where looking at how simple social processes play out can reveal multitudes about the bittersweet harshness of existence.

Even thinking of Williams' repeated, pained call-outs of "Lucy!" stir up dormant feelings of intense sadness. I love the movie beyond words, but the prospect of rewatching it petrifies me. This movie taught me what it means to love movies, where you remember your emotional response with more clarity than you do the details of the film itself. I had a similar experience watching Reichardt's next film, the feminist range western *Meek's Cutoff*. The simple decision of where she chooses to end the movie is what cements its greatness, while subtly altering everything that has come before it. For me, she's one of the best filmmakers working in America right now.

David Jenkins

Gia

G

3 coppola

I fell in love with Gia Coppola during a car crash. *Palo Alto*, her first and only feature to date, begins with an unhinged teen accelerating a parked sedan directly into a cement wall. Kids. That collision — and the smash cut to the neon blue title card that immediately follows — was all it took for me to make room for a new member of cinema's greatest dynasty. Of course, any praise of the 28-year-old Coppola has to be accompanied by the standard disclaimer: while it's true that her last name may have paved her a relatively easy road to the director's chair, the fact that she chose to adapt her first feature from a collection of short stories by James Franco went a long ways towards levelling out the playing field. More to the point, that opening sequence courses with the kind of authority that favouritism can't buy, and the film that blooms in its wake offers the most acute study of teenage malaise this side of *The Virgin Suicides*. Then again, the line between nepotism and inheritance has never been as thin as it seems.

When I met Gia Coppola for an interview in a small Manhattan office, the first note I jotted down read "Kal-El." It wasn't only until after I filed the piece that I was able to figure out what the hell I had been trying to tell myself. Back on her home planet (a rarefied subsection of Los Angeles), Coppola was just another girl in a place where Nicolas Cage is considered the black sheep. But here, on Earth, she's an effortless marvel, the coolest person in the room even when I'm not the only other person in it. On some level, she has to be aware of this — her Instagram feed is like an infinitely scrolling glimpse through the looking glass at a life that seems like it can't be real. And yet, as *Palo Alto* makes abundantly clear, Gia Coppola has never had to fake a thing.

David Ehrlich

Stephanie

Rothman

4



I fell in love with the idea of Stephanie Rothman before I'd seen any of her films. The prospect of a kind of feminist *agent provocateur* working inside the grindhouse business was just too good to be true, and if I put off watching her signature movie, 1973's *Terminal Island*, for some time, it's partly because I was afraid of spoiling the idea of her films with actual experience.

As it happens *Terminal Island* is every bit worthy of its reputation. Anticipating 1981's *Escape from New York*, Rothman's film sets its scene in a not-too-distant future where the death penalty has been abolished, and California's worst criminals are quarantined together on an island where the only law is that of the jungle. After a prologue which satirises television news, the film follows newly-arrived female inmate, Carmen (Ena Hartman), as she lands in a camp controlled by patriarch Bobby, who treats the island's tiny female population as chattel and inspires fear in his fellow prisoners, despite the fact he's a little boy who's afraid of the dark at heart. At first opportunity, Carmen and her fellow prisoners take off with a renegade group of hunter-gatherers who take a somewhat more enlightened view of sex relations, among whom the women are able to exercise their own agency — and form the backbone of an attack force to seize control of the island.

One of the female pioneers to work in exploitation idioms — Roberta Findlay, Jackie Kong, Amy Holden Jones, and Doris Wishman are among the others — Rothman's films include the requisite amount of skin but, beginning with 1970's politically plugged-in *The Student Nurses* for Roger Corman's New World Pictures, she was also uniquely attuned to the particular hazards posed to women, and the resiliency with which they manage to negotiate them. An outlier when women working behind the camera was unheard of, Rothman had to be tough, and *Terminal Island*, beginning with a lone woman being introduced to hostile territory, was the film that her entire career had prepared her to make.

Nick Pinkerton



5

# CATHERINE BREILLAT

I fell in love with Catherine Breillat when I heard about "menstrual tea." Long before I saw any of her films I came across the tantalising and terrifying image of a bloodied tampon dipped into water and consumed – it was from her unfairly maligned 2004 film *Anatomy of Hell*. What mind would come up with such a charged image of aggressive femininity, and why had I not heard of her before? Breillat quickly became one of *my* filmmakers, and while her work has consistently been described as cold and detached, for me it leaps off the screen with intense realism and sincere intimacy. From her early works of self-exploration to her brief sojourn into TV fairy tales, she consistently deconstructs the politics of the body with wit, brutality and passion.

Maybe this is owed in part to her reliance on unsimulated sex, though this did come later in her career. Her depiction of the human body, sexuality and emotions has always struck me as incredibly frank. She has the view of an alien, an outsider fascinated with the bends, twists and oozing qualities of our flesh and bones. There is such incredible weight to her representation of the body, one reminiscent of the great statues of art history: it feels three dimensional, imperfect and ripe with sensation. She manages to capture, with perfect intimacy, the power and anticipation of touch, how it is able to transform an interaction and forever change a relationship. This becomes especially potent as

she tackles her own life story with 2014's *Abuse of Weakness*, recounting her experiences with a series of strokes that led her to have her life savings extorted by a handsome con man. The film is less overtly sexual than most of her work, but is very much about the human form and what happens you lose control of it.

The malleability of the body and sexuality are at the heart of her greatest films. What is perhaps so off-putting to some is her lack of a moral stance – there is rarely any judgement or finality to her conclusions. This is at the heart of many of her strongest works, from 1988's *36 Fillette* to her most beloved film, 2001's *À Ma Soeur!.* Yet, *Anatomy of Hell* remains my favourite. The film operates on a primal level as much as an intellectual one. It needs unsimulated sex because it needs to arouse and confront while it engages the mind. The film is about a four-day erotic adventure between a man and a woman set on breaking the taboos of sexuality in the hopes of finding greater truths. Unconventional, upending and uncomfortable, the film itself is a self-reflexive exploration of social conventions that surround taboo aspects of the physical self as it relates to art, life and pornography. The film encapsulates Breillat's directorial project, and with an unearthly quietness, reveals the politics of human interaction have been too deeply entrenched in a millennia of conservative morality to come away unscathed.

Justine Smith

— illustration: Lloyd Stratton —

# JULY JUNG

Sometimes it's love at first sight. Before I saw *A Girl at My Door*, I had not even heard of July Jung. It is, after all, the writer/director's first feature. But when an arthouse heavyweight like Lee Chang-dong agreed to come on board as producer, and when an actress with the stature of Bae Doona (*The Host*, *Cloud Atlas*) was willing to sacrifice her pay to star in the low-budget production, there was good reason to suspect that this film would be something very special indeed. Trust me, when this girl comes knocking, she proves very hard to resist or ignore. And the film is great – nuanced, ambiguous and sympathetic towards the two abandoned, needy female characters at its centre, without ever quite letting them off the moral hook. Jung has arrived, fully formed. **Anton Bitel**

16



I fell in love with Agnès Varda at precisely the point where focus turns to a heart-shaped potato in her ultra-whimsical 2000 diary film, *The Gleaners and I*. That love was nourished further by her abiding dedication to her late husband, Jacques Demy, on whom much of her '90s work focused, including the 1991 essay film/biopic hybrid, *Jacquot de Nantes*. She's the sole female member of *nouvelle vague* (an epithet she routinely, proudly rejects), a stalwart of European film feminism, an outspoken champion of female filmmaking and possessor of one of the most kaleidoscopically diverse film back catalogues out there. She is, in short, one of the all-time greats. **David Jenkins**

# DESIREE AKHAVAN

17

I fell in love with Desiree Akhavan at the moment in her debut *Appropriate Behaviour* when the witty surface drama gave way to a sprawling network of far-reaching concerns. Akhavan dangles comic and titillating cherries as she leads us into the neurotic space of a bisexual New Yorker who has yet to come out to conservative Iranian parents and whose soul sustenance is sucked off a dead relationship – recollected in flashback. The depth of the story legitimises Akhavan's creative tactic of using her life as a direct reference, something she also did in her excellent web series *The Slope*, which lives up its irreverent tagline: 'Superficial, homophobic lesbians'. **Sophie Monks Kaufman**



18

# AGNÈS VARDA

Illustrations: Lauren Boglio



9

# CELINE SCIAMMA

I fell in love with Celine Sciamma when I saw the 10-year-old star of her second feature completely naked. ...Oy, that doesn't sound right. Oh dear. Allow me to explain: *Tomboy*, a coming-of-age story that captures the purity and confusion of youth as perfectly as any movie ever made, follows an androgynous kid named Laure whose family moves to a new neighbourhood outside of France. Laure's sex isn't revealed until she's shown taking a bath one evening, the camera confronting the anatomical truth that its young subject keeps like a secret. Sciamma's frank approach to this scene functions like a silent confession — we feel how invasive it is to learn what Laure so desperately wants to keep private, but the information is presented discreetly enough for us to intuit how irrelevant Laure's genitals are to her gender. Few filmmakers love their characters so much, and even fewer so sensitively understand how they struggle to become themselves.

David Ehrlich

# ELIZA HITTMAN

Peer pressure as a dark gravitational force was the subject of Eliza Hittman's offhandedly stellar 2013 debut feature, *It Felt Like Love*, about a latchkey New York teenager on the prowl for an easy sexual hook-up and, by extension, a queue-jump into adulthood. You might compare the film to Larry Clark's *Kids*, though Hittman is less interested making garish statements about the corrupt, self-abasing Youth Of Today than she is exploring the sensitivities and burdens of being a young girl left largely to her own devices. We look forward to seeing what she does next.

David Jenkins

10



11

# SALLY POTTER

In terms of love, it helps no end that Sally Potter is besties with Tilda Swinton, the star of her revolutionary gender-switching, time-travelling 1992 feature *Orlando*. But I fell in love with Potter after seeing her star in her own *The Tango Lesson* from 1997. It wasn't so much that I was instantly beguiled by her on-screen presence, nor that the film itself brought on a frenzy of wild emotions. More that it seemed such a bold thing to make after *Orlando*, a film which had the guts to present its own maker as someone utterly determined to better herself and explore all of life's potential pleasures.

David Jenkins



## 12 Muratova

I fell in love with Kira Muratova entirely by accident. And she's a director who – when her movies become a little more easy to see – I hope this love will blossom into something deeper and more meaningful. I was once commissioned to write a short capsule essay on Andrei Tarkovsky's 1966 existential epic, *Andrei Rublev*, and my editor said that I'd do well to watch some, what he termed "satellite titles" by way of research. One of the films on this list was called *Brief Encounters* by the Ukrainian director Kira Muratova. I had never heard of this film nor its maker, and from a customary delve through the catalogues of various commercial online film retailers, I was left none the wiser. This woman and her movie – at that time, which was circa 2008 – did not exist. I was utterly determined to see the film, especially as it had been aligned alongside a movie which I consider to be one of cinema's great masterworks.

Asking around mostly UK critics, I got vague nods of recollection, but mostly my requests resulted in baffled shrugs. Every search I made online auto-corrected to David Lean's *Brief Encounter*. It was only by searching for its Russian Cyrillic title that I found a website – very much not a commercial online film retailer – which offered a download of the film in 10 segments of eight minutes a piece. Download speeds were... modest, and after a good four days of diligent clicking, waiting and shooing down a cavalcade of garish (and sometimes pornographic) ad pop-ups, I finally acquired a copy of this illusive film. I played it, and it worked. Though, there were no subtitles. Cue, another three days submerged in the murky (though surprisingly friendly) world of fan subtitling forums. Finally, I had it all set and ready to go. And I watched the film, and it was wonderful – an intense, politically-tinged love triangle drama about a housing officer (played by Muratova) in love with a maverick geologist who, it transpires, once had an affair with her lissom maid. From the two or three other films I've seen, Muratova is a filmmaker crying out for a full and detailed retrospective.

David Jenkins

13

Alanis



## Obomsawin

I fell (even deeper) in love with Alanis Obomsawin when she said, "The last thing they wanted was an Indian to document anything." This statement echoes through Canada's history of genocide, oppression and erasure of native experiences, and lies at the heart of Obomsawin's own radical documentary voice. 1971's *Christmas at Moose Factory* is a film told through drawings of native children, and from the very beginnings of her filmmaking career, she gave a voice to her subjects. Combining her own soft spokenness with the narration of children, this film exemplifies the ordinariness of native life, foregoing both the romanticisation and vilification so present in popular culture. Also, choosing to primarily focus on the children's drawings gives power to their voices, allowing them to have control over their world and the way they see it. Deceptively simple, the film is a beautiful ode to the "other" in a society that is mischaracterised as inclusive and multicultural.

Decades later in 1993, Obomsawin would make her best known and arguably most politically charged film: *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*. The Oka crisis, the conflict at the heart of the film, was seen as a land dispute, but the anger was felt far deeper for the residents of Kanehsatake who were preserving their history from another wave of erasure. The film provides a unique service, offering a voice to the radical and oppressed at a time when they were being characterised by the popular media as irrational, violent and even monstrous. Obomsawin so deftly tells a story of regaining power after genocide, though does so by revealing the multiplicity of oppression, asking as many questions as she answers. She may not be a household name, but she is perhaps Canada's foremost documentarian and her work continues to provide an essential voice to a community that has long been silenced.

Illustrations: Laurena Popko

Justine Smith

14



## Mania Akbari

I fell in love with Mania Akbari's work from the moment I saw the very first sequence of her 2011 film *One. Two. One*, which had been programmed at the Edinburgh Film Festival. That first sequence, over five minutes long, beautiful and complex, could only be made by a filmmaker completely in control of her medium, unafraid of being provocative, who understood the politics of gender and also the relationship of art to the reality of life around her.

So then I just had to learn more about Mania and find a way to see all her work that I could access. Her one and only 'acting' role was as star of Abbas Kiarostami's profound *Ten*. I learned about her subsequent move into filmmaking and the three films which followed, the facing of her own mortality during a battle with breast cancer, and then her devastating decision to go into exile from her native country, Iran, when it became obvious that the authorities there would always find a way of not allowing her films to be seen. It's then that I understood a little of what went into making Mania Akbari, the bold and courageous and radical filmmaker that she is.

Soon after, I met Mania in her newly-adopted city of London, in the company of her sister Roya who is also an artist and filmmaker. We talked like friends, as if we'd known each other for a long time, with Roya translating the nuances of our conversation. After that, I couldn't wait for Second Run to release *One. Two. One*, which we happily managed in July 2013.

In that July too, Mania was given the distinction of a full retrospective at the BFI Southbank and, since arriving in her adopted country, she has completed three more films including the powerful and very personal *Life May Be*, made together with Mark Cousins in 2014. I cannot wait to see the film Mania makes next.

Mehelli Modi

Founder of Second Run DVD



15

Sofia

Coppola

I fell in love with Sofia Coppola when I was 16. I was watching *Lost in Translation* (second viewing), my vision fogged by a stream of salty tears, sobbing silently in a heap on my bedroom floor as Bob (Bill Murray) and Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) hugged before parting on that busy street.

The film's opening shot, then-18-year-old Johansson's derrière in see-through peach-pink knickers, is one of the film's famed images. However, it is the following frame, of Johansson sat on her hotel window sill, a lonely figure silhouetted against a twinkling Tokyo cityscape, that is emblematic of all that Coppola does best.

For a filmmaker so interested in luxury (think *Lost in Translation*'s high-end, high-rise hotel, the faded glamour of the Chateau Marmont in *Somewhere*, the stacks of trinkets in both *Marie Antoinette* and *The Bling Ring*), Coppola's style is surprisingly economical. Favouring starkly framed vistas, clean composition and a detached gaze, she seems both enamoured with and repulsed by the things that money can and can't buy. This detached gaze serves the insider/outsider narrative that runs through all of Coppola's films.

In *Somewhere*, emotional emptiness thrives among decadent excess; in *The Virgin Suicides*, the Lisbon sisters experience crushing repression in the full bloom of puberty. In *Marie Antoinette*, the preening princess who has it all (and the shoes to match) is riddled with teenage angst. In *Lost in Translation*, the bustling backdrop of Tokyo only serves to reinforce the profound sense of loneliness from which both Bob and Charlotte suffer.

Themes of heartbreak, isolation, depression and doubt plague Coppola's characters, in spite of their glossy trappings. Her camera is drawn to surface beauty, but to call her cinema shallow is to miss her point entirely. Her films play in the space between vapidity, vanity and interior depth.

Simran Hans



16

j

# ODIE MACK

I fell in love with Jodie Mack as soon as she began imitating the guitar solo from the end of Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* with just the waaoooms of her voice. Played over the shredding of hundreds of old posters, this moment from the finale of *Dusty Stacks of Mom*, Mack's 2013 stop-motion rock musical, is the director at her most silly and smart. The over-the-top bombastic colours relish in the destruction of the remnants of a bygone era, while also suggesting a critique of the ideologies that define modern day life. Who says you have to be deadly serious to take down capitalism? Who says the avant-garde can't be fun?

Emerging on the scene with her American Dream turned Recession Reality musical *Yard Work Is Hard Work* in 2008 (made from magazine cut outs), Mack has become one of the most recognisable names in contemporary avant-garde cinema. If the idea of the avant-garde still conjures up images of static cameras placed at the end of a hallway for hours on end, any given five minutes of Mack's work challenges that notion: *Glistening Thrills* features light dancing off dollar store gift bags, while *Undertone Overtone* turns tie-dye materials into a 2001-style cosmic journey.

The psychedelic appeal to Mack's shorts becomes the fuel for her interest in domestic ephemera — blankets, rugs, wallpaper, knick-knacks — where the proximity of the camera turns them into living, dancing objects. *Dusty Stacks of Mom* takes place at her parent's poster shop in Florida, as Mack (literally) re-animates the

forgotten objects of a business overtaken by the Internet. Mack turns posters of Cher, Britney Spears and Scarface, along with markers, mailers and accounting boxes, into a motion ballet with her mother as the rock star (Mack took the film on a road show during her recent sabbatical at Dartmouth, performing the Pink Floyd soundtrack live to enthusiastic revelry). Mack's old school ethos — shooting in 16mm, all edits done in camera, and stop motion effects — turns the capitalist machine of her objects of study into something personal and delightful.

Even more significant is the way Mack's cinema is engaging with new approaches to 3D. In her most recent work, *Razzle Dazzle*, the screen flickers between various objects that sparkle or glisten in front of the camera. As they quickly pass by our eyes, the little pecks of light glow as an after-effect, creating the sense of two different spaces, an extraordinary light pattern emerging out of the ordinary. And truly nothing can beat Mack's mind-blowing 16mm feature made up only of squiggled lines of light: the three-minute *Let Your Light Shine*. The prismatic lines break down the entire notion of the screen, shooting off in every direction past its edges. If the avant-garde tradition has long been about breaking through our pre-conceived notions, Jodie Mack is tearing the world apart turning the rejects of society into the coolest universe there is.

Peter Labuza

— illustration: Laurene Boglio —

17  
Samira  
Makhmalbaf



Samira Makhmalbaf's 2000 film *Blackboards* was the first Iranian film I ever saw. It's about a group of female teachers and the various alternate uses they have for the blackboards they carry on their backs, such as shields to protect from flying rubble caused by enemy fighters carpet bombing the mountainsides. I loved it so much that I sought out her previous film, *The Apple*, from 1998, which is nothing less than a masterpiece, one of the great debut features in cinema history. In the Iranian tradition – one cultivated by her own father, the great Mohsen Makhmalbaf – it's a film which blends the poetic and the realistic to talk about a society prone to censure, tyranny and inequality. She has not made a film since 2008's *Two-Legged Horse*, and we sincerely hope she starts up again soon.

David Jenkins

Nicole  
Holofcener



I fell in love with Nicole Holofcener when I watched her 2001 film, *Lovely & Amazing*, and observed the sublimely ridiculous yet touching role she had written for Raven Goodwin – then aged nine. Her character, Annie is the youngest of three sisters and is a tubby black anomaly next to alabaster reeds, Catherine Keener and Emily Mortimer. Of the many concerns the older sisters have, Annie is not always number one. She handles this by feigning adulthood in a way that is endearingly at odds with her rampant immaturity. Holofcener creates airy environments and gives her characters the space to breathe and grow into their own eccentric shapes.

Sophie Monks Kaufman

18  
Signe  
Baumane

I fell in love with Signe Baumane on discovering her 2008 animated short film series, *The Teat Beat of Sex*. 'Surely you can't show female sexuality and everyone's genitalia so viscerally?' I thought, in a happy shock state. The series is billed as 'explicitly educational.' Lessons landed immediately. 'This is how we blast through asphyxiating representations of femininity!' Research revealed the existence of a feature that had played film festivals but had no theatrical release. In *Rocks in my Pockets*, Baumane depicts mental illness with comic verve and shape-shifting visual flair. The only way to see it was to programme it. So why not come to our screening at ICA London on 23 August?

Sophie Monks Kaufman

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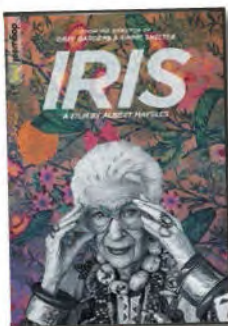
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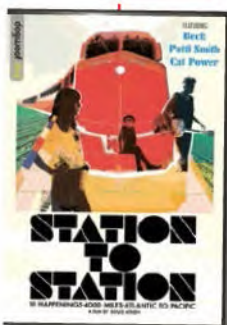
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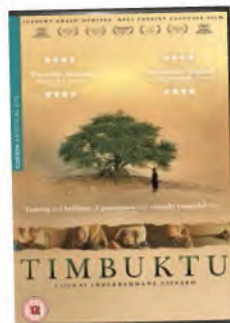
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Cast your minds back to the summer of 2010. David Cameron was settling into Number 10, national unemployment was at its highest level since 1994 and normal service resumed in England's World Cup campaign as Fabio's Flops returned home from South Africa following a 4-1 shellacking at the hands of Germany. For the working class people of Britain, these were desperate times. Step forward Clio Barnard, who announced herself as a bold new voice in the social realism scene with her vital docudrama debut *The Arbor* before enhancing her reputation three years later with *The Selfish Giant*, another stark, essential examination of poverty-stricken Britain.

Adam Woodward

I love how Austrian filmmaker Jessica Hausner makes movies about miracles. Sometimes these can include explorations of the supernaturally eerie (2004's *Hotel*), or they can be miracles of a higher religious order (2009's *Lourdes*) and they can even be the life or death decisions we make which appear to defy all known logic (2014's *Amour Fou*). There's a cold philosophy at play in her work, and some might see her as the female counterpoint to the iceman-in-chief, Michael Haneke. Yet Hausner's films are permeated with bone dry humour and a sense of the absurd. She allows us to snigger at human naiveté, while never straying too far from her ambitions of honesty and earnestness.

David Jenkins

I must confess that the directorial oeuvre of French director Pascale Ferran is little known to me, though I love her nonetheless. It was more a consummate affection when seeing her impassioned and heartily erotic 2006 take on *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, though this developed into all-out adoration come half way through her highly divisive 2014 whatsit, *Bird People*. In that film, a two-part expressionist essay about personal freedom set in the highly unglamorous confines of an airport hotel, one character just randomly turns into a bird, and spends much of the second half just... flying around. On paper, it sounds godawful. On the screen, it's transcendent and stirringly bold.

David Jenkins



## Ursula<sup>(23)</sup> Meier

I didn't fall in love with French-Swiss director Ursula Meier at first sight, as I found her Godardian debut feature from 2008, *Home*, to be just two thirds of a great movie. A kernel of hope for the future was planted and cultivated, however, and when her follow-up, *Sister*, dropped into competition at the 2012 Berlin Film Festival, a full-blown affair had been instigated. It's hard to talk generally about Meier's interests as a filmmaker, as her two fiction features are very different in many ways, though the latter of the two presents a filmmaker in immense control of both her stories and her actors. I'll be first in the queue with a bullet when her next feature is revealed to the world.

David Jenkins

## Dominga<sup>(24)</sup> Sotomayor

From the ominous, dusk-lit opening shots of Dominga Sotomayor's brilliant 2012 debut feature, *Thursday Till Sunday*, it was obvious that we were in the rarified company of a special talent. Hailing from Chile and barely scraping 30 years, Sotomayor announced herself as a natural filmmaker.— aware of space, aware of the frame, aware of how human interactions play out within the cloistered confines of a family car, aware of how a story develops naturally, but also aware of more complex and unspoken issues within Chilean society. She has since directed two shorts and a medium length feature named *Mar* which we are extremely eager to catch up with.

David Jenkins

## Joanna<sup>(25)</sup> Hogg

Absence and intimacy are the twin pillars of Joanna Hogg's cinema, in which we are invited to savour the contradictions of authentic, loving adult relationships set against austere backdrops. In each of her three films to date, 2007's *Unrelated*, 2010's *Archipelago* and 2013's *Exhibition*, the British writer/director's expert use of space serves to augment the emotional and physical disconnect between her characters. Yet while Hogg is often spoken of in formalist terms, the unmistakable human curiosity evident in her work means the precise dissections of middle class mores that she performs are anything but surgical. Excitingly, you get the sense the best is still to come.

Adam Woodward



I first fell in love with Josephine Decker in a bland, corporate room in an office building situated on Berlin's bland, corporate Potsdamer Platz. It was during the 2013 Berlinale, and Decker was there doing press for both her debut narrative feature, *Butter on the Latch*, and its follow-up, *Thou Wast Mild and Lovely*. I was one of the first journalists to sit down with her at the fest. Within moments, we fell into an easy banter, and by the end, the interview transcended mere curious lines of questioning to reach a sincere, at times confessional, conversation. We talked about (and criticised) the lack of women writing about film, the expectations and pressures placed on female directors, and sex.

When her press agent came in to ask us to wrap up, Decker asked for more time. I was smugly pleased, but also genuinely happy that we could keep talking. When we finally parted ways, exchanging emails and promises to stay in touch, I felt that with this interview I had accomplished something; that the past few weeks spent in Berlin — where I had avoided any real semblance of labour in favour of wallowing in the bleakness that is the German capital in winter — was now justified. When I stepped out of the interview room, I went to check the sound on the tape. I hadn't pressed record.

With no formal film training, Decker brings a productive — for lack of a better word — naivety to her works, as they are unencumbered by cinematic referentiality, and at times even logic. *Butter* opens with a stage play, followed by the protagonist Sarah (Sarah Small) engaged in an increasingly panicked phone call, where it is clear the person on the other end is in danger; it is never made clear who she is talking to. Another scene finds Sarah in what is presumably the morning after a date rape: disrobed and disoriented, she flees a dark apartment into blinding daylight. When she meets up with her best friend, Isolde (Isolde Chae-Lawrence), at a Balkan folk camp in the woods, none of this is ever mentioned again, possibly suppressed by her character's psyche or perhaps it was all only a private nightmare that she imagined. Some might call it confusing. I call it magical realism mumblecore with horror influences.

# JOSEPHINE DECKER

That Decker's CV includes directing, writing, acting and editing credits is partly practical necessity — working with little money (*Thou Wast Mild and Lovely* was funded via Kickstarter), Decker isn't the first indie filmmaker to take on a myriad of roles in order to balance the (micro) budgets. But beyond practicality, this multifold approach to filmmaking is also suggestive of her directorial works: not easily defined, categorised, and most certainly not adhering to any kind of expectations.

After her 2008 documentary on bisexuality, *Bi the Way*, Decker began working with mumblecore regent Joe Swanberg. (The exploration of fluid sexual desires is evident in both her features). In 2011, when Swanberg put out eight films, Decker was a part of three: starring in *Autoerotic*, *Uncle Kent* and *Art History*, the latter of which she also wrote. At the same time, Decker continued to make her own shorts (*Me the Terrible*, *Squeezebox* and *Where Are You Going, Elena?*), which garnered critical praise.

*Thou Wast* (written after Decker's stint at a Buddhist monastery) has more narrative structure than her debut: a farmhand named Akin (Swanberg steps in front of the camera under Decker's direction this time) becomes involved with his employer's daughter, the enigmatic Sarah (Sophie Traub). Yet structure does not equate didactic clarity, which is perhaps a result of Decker's performance art background: her films are about evoking the emotional and ephemeral moments of (often female) subjectivity.

After the initial wave of panic subsided, I sat down in a chair outside of that bland room. Decker was already on to her next interview, whereas the one I had conducted now only existed in memory. I confessed my fuck up to her press agent shortly after and begged for a do-over. I got the chance, but by the time we could meet again, Decker admitted to being exhausted from a combination of press and the Berlin nightlife. Our second interview was spent awkwardly attempting to recreate our original (and what my self-flagellating recollection has turned into) truly genius dialogue. It didn't work. The experience was perfectly fitting in regards to Decker's work: slightly frustrating, evocative and ultimately impossible to recreate.

Kiva Reardon

Illustration: Julianna Bron

27



I fell in love with Laura Poitras about 80 minutes into the world premiere of *CITIZENFOUR* at the 2014 New York Film Festival, when the older couple sitting directly in front of me began to engage in a hushed but distractingly animated conversation with each other. I wanted to shush them, but I sure am glad that I resisted the temptation — when the lights came up, the chatty viewers were revealed to be Edward Snowden's parents. As they took to the stage for the post-screening Q&A, it was clear that Snowden's mother and father (Elizabeth and Lonnie) were overwhelmed by the footage of their fugitive whistleblower son now enjoying a relatively peaceful life in Russia with his girlfriend. Surely they had been in touch with the 31-year-old ex-pat in the months since he leaked hundreds of thousands of NSA files to the public, but Poitras' documentary seemed to frame Snowden's efforts in a way that clarified the consequences of his ordeal for those closest to him.

## Laura Poitras

The film was astonishing from the outset, and only became increasingly so as it illustrated just how much Poitras risked and sacrificed in order to help Snowden reveal the truth, but it was only when I saw how *CITIZENFOUR* had illuminated his story for people who had lived it that I fully understood the personal consequence of this political exposé. This is what Poitras does, and her rare talent for distilling the upheaval of modern warfare to an indivisibly human level — for making major events human, and human events major — has made her "9/11 Trilogy" such an indispensable portrait of our complex new millennium. And what has been Poitras' reward for her gifts, and for exhibiting the bravery required to make use of them? She's become one of the few people whose name can be found on both an Academy Award and also just about every US government watch list.

David Ehrlich

## Kim Longinotto

I fell in love with Kim Longinotto when it became clear that she's the documentarian I've been looking for all my life. This was while watching *Dreamcatcher* in February 2015. I've been playing catch-up on her back-catalogue since — not binging but leisurely snacking. Each film is to be savoured. 'Savoured' is a word choice that I need to justify considering that almost every film she makes is marinated in real-world brutality. I use it because I savour films that show me dark truths illuminated by a filmmaker's bravery and brilliance.

Longinotto's first priority is human interest. She finds people, usually women, whose lives are playing out in the needle's eye of contemporary female struggles. She has an uncanny ability to embed where drama is going down. She is an invisible presence. We scarcely hear her voice. Her focus is always on the story and the story is the people and the people are from everywhere.

28



Illustration: Lauren Boglio

Longinotto's favourite subjects tend to have the tenacity to react with compassionate smarts to whatever shit-show life has rolled out. The first subject I met through her work was Brenda Myers-Powell, Mother Teresa to Chicago's prostitute population in *Dreamcatcher*. Now, I know about *Rough Aunties* aka the women of Bobbi Bear in Durban, SA, who nurture kids that have been sexually abused and help to arrest their abusers. I know about the rampaging figure of Sampat Pal Devi, leader of the Indian activist group, *Pink Saris*, that pay furious house calls to men as a way to challenge the violence they nonchalantly inflict on their women. It's not always adults that emerge as the focus. In *The Day That I Will Never Forget* a child victim of genital mutilation calmly persuades her mother not to carry out the procedure against her younger sister. And so it goes, on and on, with Longinotto meeting hopelessness with the hope offered by opening the curtains and letting the light in.

Sophie Monks Kaufman



## Heddy Honigmann 29

I'll never forget the first time I encountered the prolific Heddy Honigmann. A large, excited crowd gathered in a cinema in Amsterdam where a festival (IDFA) honoured the filmmaker by way of a masterclass entitled *Try a Little Tenderness*. In 2014 she became the second director ever to receive the festival's Living Legend award. Just like Paddington, Honigmann is an immigrant from darkest Peru where she lived with her Polish-Jewish parents. She has since become a Dutch national treasure. Her humane, compassionate and inquisitive nature shines brightly through all her films. She is particularly interested in music, memory, the outsider spirit and those affected by trauma and the mental and physical displacement caused by war. She is a keen observer who lets her camera linger and handles her questioning with sensitivity. But just like, say, Louis Theroux or Werner Herzog, she isn't afraid to ask the difficult questions.

One of her documentaries that sticks most in the memory is 2000's *Crazy*, a portrait of UN soldiers in the post-conflict period. She collates horrific memories by asking each person about a song that reminds them of their time at war. She lets the song play out and closely observes with her camera, zooming in to reveal reactions. Soon, a pattern begins to emerge. The film is about the power of music, but it also provides insightful comment about the difficulty of communicating the true impact of traumatic events through words. Honigmann has also turned the camera on her own family. At one point during her masterclass, she plays a clip of 2004's *Food for Love* and we can hear her talking (off camera) to her late mother as she prepares a meal. It is at this point in the talk Honigmann gets emotional, and ever the honest storyteller, she isn't ashamed to show it. Her personal approach and determination to lift the lid on the human experience in all walks of life – from immigrants busking on the metro in Paris in 1998's *The Underground Orchestra* to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in 2014's *Around the World in 50 Concerts* – remains inspiring. Her curiosity and thirst for knowledge knows no bounds.

Katherine McLaughlin

## Sarah Polley 30

Few films have affected me quite as profoundly or as unexpectedly as *Stories We Tell*. The first time I saw Sarah Polley's extraordinary cine-memoir was at the 2012 Venice Film Festival, where immediately after the film's premiere I rushed outside and took out my phone – not to tweet my reaction or check my emails as habit typically dictates but to reach out to a close relative. Looking back, it's hard to put a finger on what exactly came over me in that moment. I don't consider myself a particularly emotional person, and nothing about the specific nature of the candid contributions from Polley and her family that comprise this personal investigation into identity, memory and truth resonated with me as such. It was simply – I subsequently reasoned – a beautiful piece of filmmaking.



A former child actress who has worked with the likes of Atom Egoyan and Terry Gilliam, Polley has emerged as one of Canada's brightest young directors. Like her double Oscar-nominated 2006 feature debut, *Away from Her*, and her smartly observed 2011 follow-up, *Take This Waltz*, *Stories We Tell* represents a marked progression in the career of a budding auteur – each film offering a different perspective on what it means to be human and the complexities of the bonds we form. Polley has stepped away from acting in recent years and is reportedly developing two projects, a six-part miniseries based on Margaret Atwood's 'Alias Grace' and a feature-length adaptation of John Green's 'Looking for Alaska', though neither are currently listed as being in pre-production. At 36, Polley appears to be in no hurry to share the stories she wants to tell. As long as she keeps producing honest, passionate work of such clarity and lyricism, that suits us just fine.

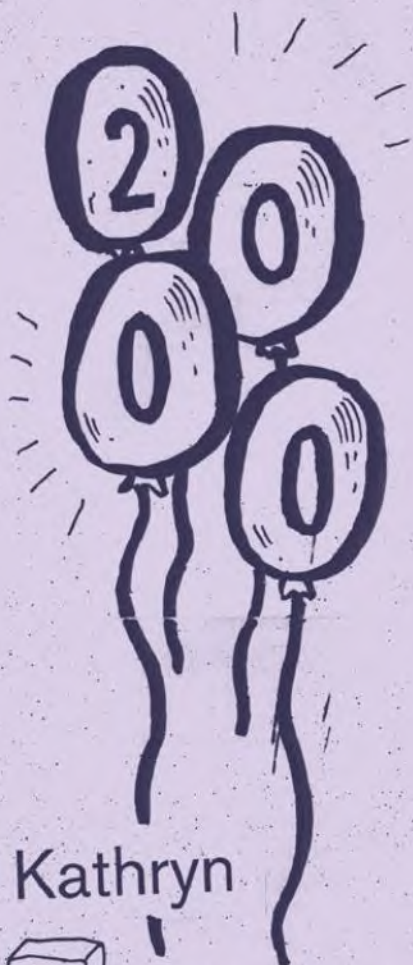
Adam Woodward



I met Maren Ade once briefly at the Locarno Film Festival; I wasn't quite sure what to say to her, which is appropriate considering that her films are strung together out of awkward pauses and moments of indecision. Not that the friendly, self-effacing woman on the hotel patio bore much resemblance to her characters. In her two features 2003's *The Forest for the Trees* and 2009's *Everyone Else*, Ade has staked out territory as a connoisseur of human cruelty and frailty. In their best moments, the films show these two qualities in close proximity to one another.

It's clear, for instance, that Melanie, the socially anxious schoolteacher played by Eva Löbau in *The Forest for the Trees*, is a person with thin skin who is nevertheless drawn towards situations and strangers that are all sharp edges. Fixating suddenly on a comparatively put-together peer (Daniela Holtz), who suffers her intrusions with a friendly pity that gradually shades into full-out frustration and contempt, Melanie is measuring herself, painfully and methodically, against a woman whose self-confidence is miles beyond her own. And she knows it. Ade's idea to strip a *Single White Female*-style stalker story of its generic silliness and illuminate some kind of plausible pathology pays off in a film that has the pressurised tension of a thriller yet also finally feels suggestive and spacious; the final scene, which is dreamily staged and powerfully scored by Grandaddy, is a grace note gently curled into a question mark – a bit of peaceful release for the character and the audience alike.

*The Forest for the Trees* was produced as a student film, and while it's effectively made within its limited means, even fans were gobsmacked by the stylistic leap forward of *Everyone Else* – one of the most accomplished comedies of the past decade. Beautifully shot on location in Sardinia (the gleaming digital cinematography is by Bernhard Keller), the film is a study of a relationship souring in the sun; lounging half-naked by the pool in a rented villa, twentysomethings Chris (Lars Edinger) and Gitti (Birgit Minichmayr) are the very picture of post-adolescent restlessness – overgrown children whose sophisticated vocabularies belie infantile sensibilities. Over the course of a long, hot weekend, the pair are menaced by house guests who pick relentlessly at their shared sore spots. As in *The Forest for the Trees*, the tension is palpable and almost unbearable, but smartly punctuated by bits of goofy physical humour (one slapstick gag finds a character brutally bloodied in an encounter with a glass door) and once again wrapped up by a scene that's open to interpretation – featuring perhaps the most ambiguous fart joke in film history. Perhaps I should have congratulated Ade on that particular accomplishment, but the moment had passed. Next time.



Kathryn

32

Bigelow

I fell in love with Kathryn Bigelow during my years as a film student at her alma mater, where I spent hours on end staring at the *Strange Days* poster that hangs in one of the classrooms. Sometimes it seemed like I could learn more about making movies from that clunky one-sheet than I could from the course. I'll never forget the tagline, written in all lowercase: "new year's eve 1999. anything is possible. nothing is forbidden." Those words seemed to perfectly sum up Bigelow's ethos as a director, her career having been defined by shattering ceilings and telling stories that other filmmakers felt they didn't have the clearance level to tell. I've seen most of her movies, but I still haven't seen *Strange Days*. Nevertheless, I think I got the message.

David Ehrlich

33



Ava

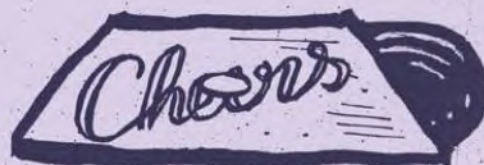
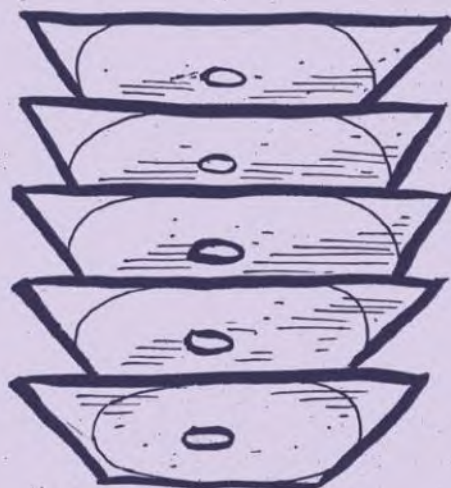
DuVernay

I fell in love with Ava DuVernay when the end credits rolled on her Martin Luther King-focused civil rights drama *Selma*. That was the point at which I awoke from the spell the film had cast and began to consider its creator. DuVernay is a savvy craftswoman. Her background as a film publicist has drummed into her the necessity of narrative hooks and angles. She shoots at delicate political points and hits them with the surety of a Katniss Everdeen arrow. Yet she is full of hot feeling too. The future holds Oprah-backed TV series, *Queen Sugar* and TV movie, *For Justice*.

Sophie

Monks

Kaufman



Mia

34

Hansen-Løve

I've fallen for Mia Hansen-Løve so many times that it would be impossible for me to remember the first time it happened, but, as with all such things, the most recent occasion is the one I remember most vividly. It was towards the end of *Eden*, when I noticed that the protagonist — whose stagnant dream of becoming a prominent DJ keeps him in a permanent state of arrested development — hadn't aged a day during the 20 years of his life covered by the film. That realisation illuminated something that resonates throughout each of the four effortlessly cool and endlessly empathetic features that Hansen-Løve has made to date: we all get old together, but everyone has to grow up on their own.

David Ehrlich

# Andrea

35



# Arnold

"This is the dog's bollocks." It's not a phrase you would ordinarily expect to hear while watching the annual gush-a-thon also known as the Academy Awards. But that is exactly why I love Andrea Arnold, who said this to a bewildered array of unassuming, perma-tanned Hollywood types when collecting her Best Short Film award for *Wasp* back in 2005. It's nice to think that perhaps led to certain members of the Tinseltown elite frailing the length and breadth of the Urban Dictionary for a translation of this endearing colloquialism.

Stylistically, Arnold shares the lightly avant-garde goals of the Dogme95 movement, which included filmmakers such as Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. Her desire to prioritise performance, story and character above all else is clear, and she often uses first time actors, handheld cameras and natural light to create a more rugged and piercing form of social realism.

Arnold rejects terms such as 'gritty' or 'grim' as suitable descriptors of her body of work, but it is difficult to locate a reason to

be more upbeat about things. Her films are physical experiences, relentless in their pursuit of an emotional reaction. She has famously stated, "I don't do easy rides" and has so far kept her word with her 2006 debut film *Red Road* packing punch after punch in its story of troubled CCTV operator Jackie (Kate Dickie) and her violent affair with a council estate felon.

2009's *Fish Tank* observes the troubled relationship between daughter Mia (Kate Jarvis) and mother Joanne (Kierston Wareing), vying for the affections of dubious cad Conor (Michael Fassbender). In an industry monopolised by the male gaze, Arnold shows a rarely seen interest in female voyeurism, captured here in a deeply erotic scene when Mia spies on Joanne and Conor during a drunken sexual tryst. She transposed her concerns to classical literature, too, producing an idiosyncratic version of *Wuthering Heights* in 2011 that envisioned petty jealousies, dangerous hook-ups and bursts of violence on the moors of 19th century Yorkshire.

Rebecca Ellis

# So Yong

# Kim



Barbecued grasshoppers served piping hot on bamboo skewers is, most likely, the reason most people would've fallen in love with the South Korean-born, US-based writer/director So Yong Kim. Not through consumption of this popular Asian snack-food, but in witnessing two mop-haired Korean toddlers taking on the concept of economic self-sufficiency by way of creating their own ramshackle food vending business. This was central to her 2008 feature *Treeless Mountain*, which focused on a harried, dirt-poor mother who all-but-abandons her two young children so she can search for her estranged husband. Far from attempting to produce a hectoring, outraged screed on poverty and shortfalls in social provision for single-parent families, Kim observes the honest fall-out from this situation: that the kids don't really understand the nature of their predicament, that there will be a few tears, but their untainted vision of the world as a benign playground will reveal the

true tragedy of this neglect.

The idea that feeling lost and alone in the world can have its upsides as well as its downsides also came to fruition in her celebrated and autobiographical 2006 debut, *In Between Days*. The fear and wonderment that comes from exploring the vast, untapped terrains of the world is an abiding interest, as is the idea that children are often the product of their immediate environment. Ellen, the toddler star of her third feature, *For Ellen*, cracks wise and answers back to her adult carers, a trait born of her having to develop a thick skin having been born into a broken family. Whereas *Treeless Mountain* gave us this set-up from the perspective of the children, *For Ellen* gives it to us from the perspective of the adult, in this case a burn-out rocker played by Paul Dano who is arguably less mature than his knee-high progeny. Kim has a road trip movie called *Lovesong* slated for 2016.

David Jenkins

# GINA-PRINCE AGNIESZKA 37 BYTHEWOOD 38 HOLLAND



Illustration: Laurence Beglio

*Love and Basketball* made me like Gina Prince-Bythewood. *Beyond the Lights* made me love her. In cinema, melodrama has long been conflated with the 'woman's picture'. Scholar Maria LaPlace describes this genre as one where, "love, emotion and relationships take precedence over action and events." With the exception of treacly historical melodramas like Steven Spielberg's *The Colour Purple* or Tate Taylor's *The Help*, films that focus on the hearts and minds of black women are few and far between. In any case, these sob stories so often set in plantation-era Deep South aren't much fun – for their enslaved protagonists or their viewer. Imagine then, my delight upon discovering Prince-Bythewood's *Beyond the Lights* – a story of self-actualisation starring brown faces that wasn't about slavery.

This film, which unfairly went direct-to-DVD in the UK, works confidently within the conventions of the genre, comfortably conforming to classical narrative structure. Its strength is in Prince-Bythewood's commitment to the slow burn. Her teasing depiction of Noni (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) and Kaz's (Nate Parker) burgeoning romance is a return to the values of traditional cinematic courtship, anchored by the couple's convincing chemistry.

A film doesn't have to shock or even surprise to succeed; it simply has to delight. Whether they're sharing a breakfast burrito by the beach, *Lady and the Tramp*-style, or sitting in Kaz's truck watching planes fly overhead, the quiet moments of connection that punctuate Prince-Bythewood's stakes-high romantic melodrama are special. These scenes radiate a rare frisson, an indication of Prince-Bythewood's ability to pull startlingly sincere performances from her actors. Both Noni and Kaz describe their jobs as "crazy highs" and "better than any drug." With *Beyond the Lights*, Prince-Bythewood, recreates the crazy high of falling in love, a drug all of its own. **Simran Hans**

My relationship with the films of Agnieszka Holland has been a love-hate affair: From admiration for her bold, acerbic fiction features, 1981's *A Woman Alone* and 1990's *Europa, Europa*, to disappointments, such as with her 2014 TV remake of *Rosemary's Baby*. Still, there is one feature that has turned me into a steadfast viewer. Based on a newspaper story and veiled in realist garb, 1992's *Olivier, Olivier* is a pure blood horror picture, a wrenching reframing of motherhood as monstrous.

The ruffled field of golden wheat, a lone teenager on a bicycle and two children crushing a helpless beetle – the opening shot captures a tender world permeated by unspeakable cruelty. The Brueghel landscape hints that pain is inseparable from nature. In *Olivier, Olivier*, an overweening mother, Elisabeth, lives in fear for her fragile nine-year-old, Olivier. He disappears wearing a red cap (think Red Riding Hood), but distraught Elisabeth succumbs to what Joan Didion calls "magical thinking." Meanwhile, Elisabeth's neglected daughter, Nadine, develops mystical powers. When years later a teenage boy appears claiming to be Olivier, his make-belief sends the family reeling, between idyll and nightmare.

Infectious like a virus and incestuous, love is a weakness in *Olivier, Olivier*; it is the price we pay for not being firm in our solitude. The film is affected with helpless love: in an early sequence, Elisabeth examines a hen that fails to lay eggs. She herself is too consummate a mother, too negligent a housewife. When she loses Olivier, she mounts her husband, in reversal of the rape in *Rosemary's Baby*. But Holland, whose family survived the Holocaust and who lost her father when young, never allows us to forget that hope can be a dangerous delusion. Nadine's witchcraft, by contrast, is the fullest, creative expression of her womanhood, her desire for both power and truth. **Ela Bittencourt**

# 39 Mati Diop

I first fell in love with Mati Diop in Claire Denis' *35 Shots of Rum*. It was her first role, where she played Joséphine, the young, impossibly beautiful daughter of an immigrant, Lionel (longtime Denis collaborator Alex Descas). Diop was mesmerising. Though 26 at the time, she played Joséphine's gradual individualisation (and sexualisation) as though she were just discovering her body and self.

Meeting Diop through the eyes of Denis was what I imagine it would be like if a best friend introduced you to a future life partner: this emerging actress came with the highest possible vetting — I was committed to following her career. Unsurprisingly, then, I fell in love with Diop all over again in 2013. During a retrospective of Denis' work at Toronto Film Festival, the French director selected Diop's *A Thousand Suns* as her Carte Blanche choice.

At 45 minutes, 2013's *A Thousand Suns* is Diop's longest work to date. (Immediately after *35 Shots*, she began directing shorts, which played at festivals like Rotterdam and Vienne to great praise: 2009's *Atlantiques*, 2011's *Snow Canon* and 2012's *Big in Vietnam*.) It's a blend of documentary and fiction, following Magaye Niang, the lead in the 1973 Senegalese classic *Touki Bouki*, which was directed by Diop's uncle, Djibril Diop Mambéty. This personal connection is foregrounded in the film, as Diop explores her relationship with her familial roots, Senegal and cinema as a whole.

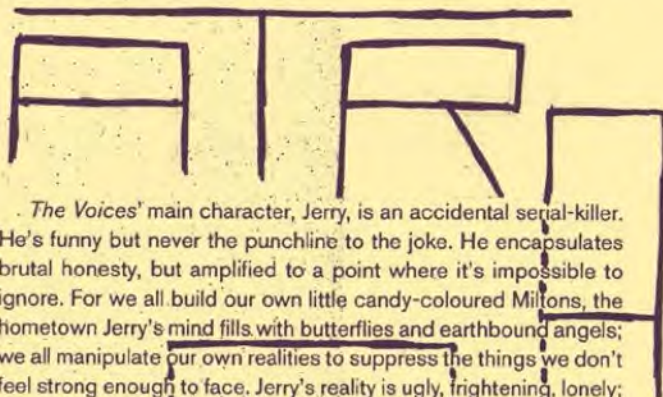
It's remarkably ambitious. But so is Diop. Though for now she has returned to acting, starring in 2014's American indie, *L for Leisure*, I'm eagerly awaiting her next directorial project. Having already proved her ability — or eye — for capturing the nuanced layers of existence, Diop is not just one to watch on screen, but when directing also demands we contemplate how she watches the world.

Kiva Reardon

# 40 DID YOU fuck THE BITCH? MARIJANE



The moment I fell in love with Marjane Satrapi was the when Ryan Reynolds sat down to discuss the psychology of morality and choice with a dog, a cat and a severed head. That's when it hit me, midway through 2015's *The Voices*: Satrapi's work is a source of such brilliance because it dares to confront the things we're most afraid to speak of. Death, war, mental illness; yet not with that reserved, dignified purity of 'respectable' cinema but with the empathy and honesty needed to embrace life at its most rich and its most absurd. In short, Satrapi makes movies which feel truly alive.

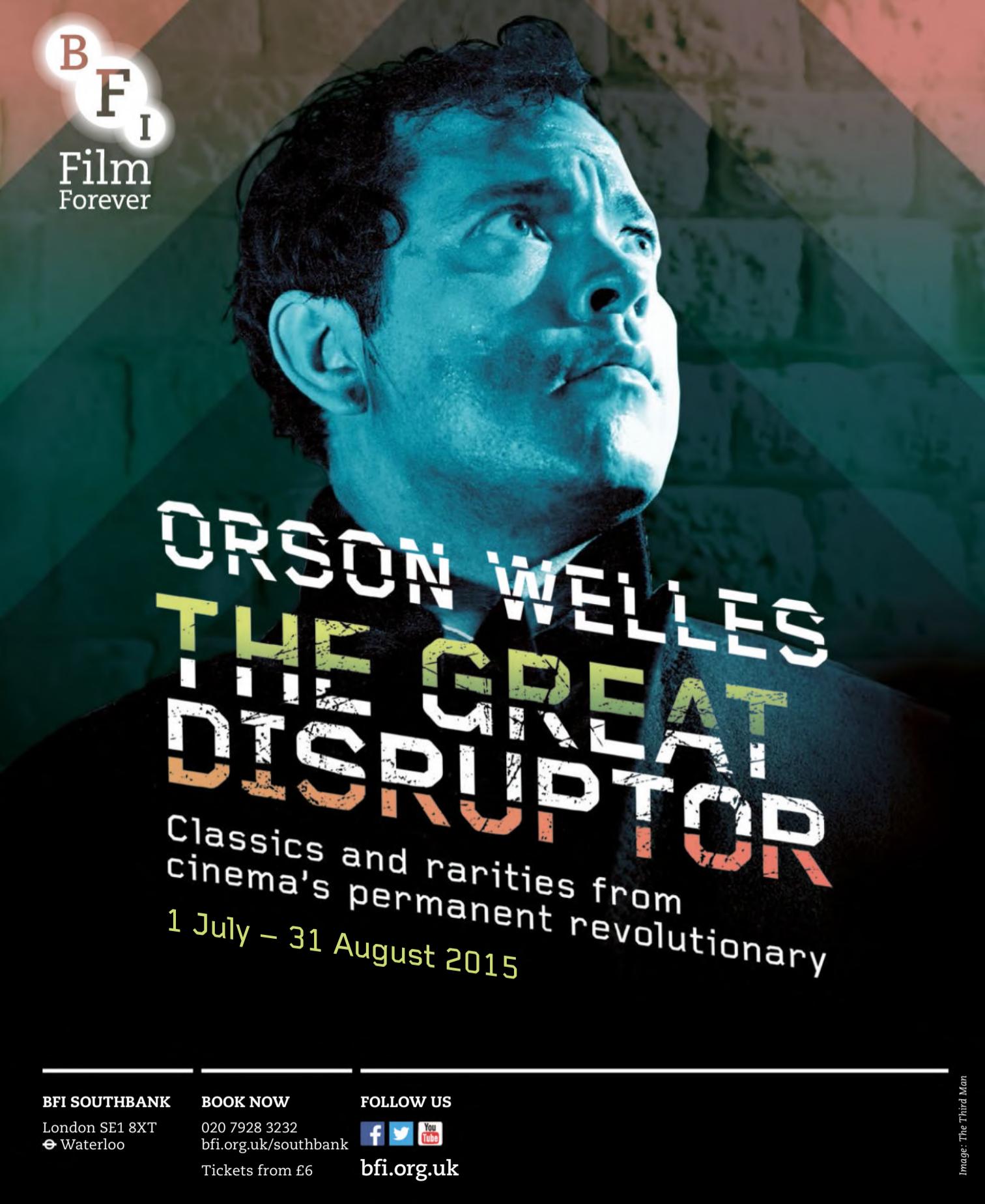


*The Voices*' main character, Jerry, is an accidental serial-killer. He's funny but never the punchline to the joke. He encapsulates brutal honesty, but amplified to a point where it's impossible to ignore. For we all build our own little candy-coloured Miltons, the hometown Jerry's mind fills with butterflies and earthbound angels; we all manipulate our own realities to suppress the things we don't feel strong enough to face. Jerry's reality is ugly, frightening, lonely; his only means of survival is to deny his true nature in favour of the comforting embrace of chattering felines and sociable ex-murder victims.

Neither does Satrapi's semi-autobiographical 2007 breakthrough, *Persepolis*, strive to be some lyric on lost innocence, instead existing as a frank explanation as to how a young mind could ever hope to survive the adult terrors of war and strife. Where death is heard only as whispers fading into darkness, and Iran's complex history plays out as a charming puppet show, where life is rather spent pre-occupied with playing Kung Fu Master. Even as a young woman, Marjane visits a childhood friend injured in the war and is surprised to hear him laugh. But as she says, sometimes, "it's the only way to bear the unbearable."

illustrations:  
LAURÈNE BOGLIO

Clarisse Loughrey



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# JOAN-MICKLIN SILVER

- 4 1 -



I first fell in love with Joan Micklin Silver watching the conclusion of her 1975 feature debut, *Hester Street*, a period piece set in a few square blocks of Manhattan circa 1896. Yankel 'Jake' Bogovnik (Steven Keats), an Americanised, secularised Russian Jew, is walking down a mercantile street in the Lower East Side with his new Americanised, secularised Polish wife, Mamie (Dorrie Kavanaugh). After a great deal of trouble and money, Jake has obtained a writ of divorcement from his first wife, Gitl (Carol Kane), whom he married years ago in the Old Country before coming abroad alone, and whom he has found dowdy and 'infuriatingly old-fashioned ever since the day she arrived at Ellis Island. Now Gitl walks the same street with her new partner, a Talmudic scholar named Bernstein (Mel Howard). Both she and Jake have gotten what they thought they wanted and are setting off to a new beginning on the gold-paved streets of the land of opportunity, but an abiding sadness hangs over the proceedings — one has a sense of the smallness of these lives, lived at the mercy of history, fashion, and the tectonic grind of the passing of generations.

The critically-lauded *Hester Street* was based on a novella published contemporarily to the era depicted, Abraham Cahan's 'Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto,' while Micklin Silver's next work, a tone-perfect 1976 adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's 1920 short story *Berenice Bobs Her Hair* starring Shelley Duvall and made for the Public Broadcasting Service, explored many of the same themes — a young woman caught between tradition and modernity, shifting generational mores, and the particular impact of fashion on one's sense of identity. (*Hair* plays an essential role in both *Hester Street* and *Berenice*.)

This sounds like the beginning of an auspicious, meteoric career, but Micklin Silver had the misfortune of coming into movies as the so-called New Hollywood, only recently ascendant, was already on the way out. Her next movie, a tale of doomed romance which very much embodied several qualities that we tend to think of as belonging to the '70s — character-based observational drama, a downbeat tone, and a willingness to entertain the idea that life is very complicated and full of compromises and doesn't always work out the way we might like it to though we muddle on regardless — was saddled with a happy ending and a sappy title, *Head Over Heels*. The untampered-with version, now called *Chilly Scenes of Winter*, finally appeared in 1982, thanks in no small part to Micklin Silver's tenacity. Along with Ivan Passer's 1981 film *Cutter's Way* — also starring the redoubtable John Heard — *Chilly Scenes of Winter* seems like the magic hour of the great time in American movies.

Silver's tenacity helped her to weather the years ahead better than most. She directed for stage and television, and lasted to re-emerge in more artistically amenable times, even enjoying a new surge of work following the success of 1981's *Crossing Delancey* on the art house circuit. In abiding through changing epochs and continuing to work — a department in which many fine female directors have not been so lucky — Micklin Silver, unlike many of her subjects, has managed not to be entirely at the mercy of the times. *Nick Pinkerton*

Illustrations: LAURÈNE BOGLIO



I fell in love with Amy Heckerling when, in *Clueless*, Cher (Alicia Silverstone), pressed to talk about that teenage obsession, virginity, said, "You see how picky I am about my shoes, and they just go on my feet." A perfectly pert quip: hard to argue with, and delivered with the sparkling Valley Girl energy for which the film (also written by Heckerling) is justly famous. Throughout a somewhat patchy filmography (including *Look Who's Talking*, episodes of *Gossip Girl* and *The Office*, and the uncharacteristically clichéd *I Could Never Be Your Woman*) Heckerling has still, thanks to the crown jewels of *Clueless* and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, proven herself to be one of the few directors respectful of girlish folly and possessed of a sly sense of visual humour.

It's easy (too easy) to talk about good girls and bad girls when you talk about teen movies. Heckerling's handling of the high school caste system is far more appealing than, say, *The Breakfast Club*, where the teens are posited as "relatable" but may as well be wearing signs around their necks. In Heckerling's high school hallways, the good girls and the bad girls conspire together, and any introduction of stereotype is intentionally pushed to a stylised level of ridiculousness (no teenage stoner has ever actually acted as stoned as Sean Penn did as Spicoli).

Heckerling cares about a lot of things that are too often slighted in film: namely female friendships, but also fashion and class. Look at Cher and Dionne (Stacey Dash), united in plaid and alpha femaleness, but willing to take the comparatively frumpy Tai (Brittany Murphy, may she rest in piece) under their wing. Heckerling won't let you forget: these girls are self-aware. "Cher's main thrill in life is a makeover. It gives her a sense of control in a world of chaos," says Dionne. You can practically hear her winking at the boys who might brush the movie off. *Clueless* is, of course, inspired by Jane Austen's 'Emma', and in an interview, Heckerling said, "If Emma were around today, she'd be making a film." Heckerling likes the idea of girls taking control — of their friendships, their sex lives, their outfits — and presents it in a non-didactic, poppy way.

Everyone knows Linda (Phoebe Cates) emerging from the pool and taking off her red bikini top in *Fast Times*. It's not the male-gaze-fest it could be. By literally making the scene a masturbatory fantasy, and cutting it short when Linda runs into the bathroom to get a q-tip, Heckerling pokes fun at the salivating male crowd. Similarly, after girl-next-door Stacy (Jennifer Jason Leigh) has disappointing sex with Mike (Robert Romanus), the next scene shows Linda and Stacy wearing the cutesy stripped uniforms of the fast food restaurant (at the mall, natch) at which they work and both cutting into a phallic slab of meat. The good girl and the bad girl, performing together a gesture of misandry and girl talking. Like Cher, they're way smarter than the boys might initially think. Heckerling's movies don't explicitly come out and state themselves as feminist (though, for the most part, they are). Rather, they're far more likely to take into account all the clichés that exist about girls, exploit them playfully and finally say, "Whatever!" *Abbey Bender*



I fell in love with Lucrecia Martel at precisely the same time as everyone else did: during the first five minutes of *La Ciénaga*, in which the Argentinian director zombifies her country's helpless middle-class into the cast of the most terrifying movie that George Romero never made. Also, I fell in love with Lucrecia Martel at exactly the same place as (almost) everyone else did: film school. Few contemporary directors have so quickly become ingrained in the curriculum – *La Ciénaga* was her debut, and it didn't premiere until 2002 – but there's nothing remotely academic about Martel's style. In fact, her films represent everything they teach you not to do, her feverish rhythms and non-linear editing violating the sacrosanct "180 rule" at every available turn in her efforts to sustain the sense that her characters' world is decomposing before your eyes.

The story of a bourgeois family mired in a paralysing state of rot, *La Ciénaga* introduced the world to a filmmaker who wields confusion better than most filmmakers do clarity. She comprehensively dismisses the conventional thinking that sound must be used to complete the image, and instead deploys ambient noise to separate from the image in such a way as to imbue the mundane with an extraordinary social tension, defiling spacial cohesion in favour of creating an impermeable pall of subliminal inertia and disquiet. In other words, what Martel's got is the kind of thing you can't teach. And yet, there I was, transfixed.

I still remember a quote of hers from the reading assignment we were forced to read during first semester, in which she described the setting of her debut as, "A society that lives vaguely hoping that nothing will ever change, and in terror of everything repeating itself indefinitely." It reminded me too much of film school, so I dropped out.

David Ehrlich

## Lynn Shelton

It was while stalking the career back catalogue of indie ad-lib duo the Duplass brothers that my love affair with Lynn Shelton began. Seen by many as the Godmother of the indie sub-genre known as "mumblecore," Shelton sits at the centre of a small enclave of mainly American filmmakers experimenting within the boundaries of independent film.

At its heart, mumblecore is about capturing a certain authenticity. A flexible, loosely sketched script acts as a springboard for performances informed by improvisation. The resultant films centre on the naturalistic, at times inconsequential conversations between characters, often captured in only a handful of prolonged scenes. Shelton employs the use of complex yet light-hearted narrative backdrops in which to illicit an uncomfortable but compelling realism from her cast. Her stories include: a drunken encounter with an unrequited love's lesbian sister (2011's *Your Sister's Sister*); the tale of a masseuse who develops a sudden phobia of the human body (2013's *Touchy Feely*); the playing out of a mutual dare by two best pals to star in a home-made gay porn film (2009's *Humpday*).



Shelton's unassuming, lightly experimental style first gained recognition in *Humpday*, starring the aforementioned Mark Duplass in mid-life crisis mode as a settled down thirtysomething with itchy feet whose life of domestic bliss is dismantled when he is re-acquainted with a free-spirited old college bud. The film explores a semi-autobiographical theme, common throughout Shelton's work – arrested development. Focusing her stories on dysfunctional adults in crises, Shelton's films play out like warts-and-all docu-dramas while still managing to evoke a sense of empathy from the (probably) cringing viewer.

Rebecca Ellis

Illustration: Olivia Bouteau

# JENNIFER & SYLVIA



I don't know if I exactly fell in love with Jen and Sylvia Soska when I saw their 2009 feature debut *Dead Hooker in a Trunk*, but the cartoonish exploitation pastiche certainly caught my eye. Made for \$2500 (and it shows), *Dead Hooker* compensates for its truly low-rent production with sheer madcap punkish energy and verve. As well as writing, directing, producing; and doing all their own stunts, Jen and Sylvia also starred as twin sisters Geek and Badass – and somewhere between those two names/types lies the sensibility of both the filmmakers and their ideal audience. Also, despite its censor-baiting title, *Dead Hooker* is full of strong women who get their bloody satisfaction from violent, abusive men.

It was a theme that the Soskas would take further with their second feature, *American Mary*, from 2012, in which a young, abused female medical student (Katharine Isabelle) finds new identity and empowerment in body modification work, while also getting vengeance against the odious male doctor who violated her. All at once an elegantly stylised rape revenger, a surgical strike (from Canadian filmmakers) against the American dream as a nightmare for women, and a fictive exploration of the mainstream that rejects (and the margins that embrace) independent artists like the Soskas themselves, *American Mary* is where the love really set in.

If I had less time for the Soskas' overly conventional slasher sequel from 2014, *See No Evil 2*, then their contribution to 2014's *The ABCs of Death 2*, 'T is for Torture Porn,' once again saw the @twisted\_twins giving genre cinema's most misogynistic instincts a much-needed feminist twist. Vocal supporters of equality and Women In Horror Month (especially as advocates of the Massive Blood Drive), the Soskas are now a regular presence on the horror circuit, putting the gender in genre.

Anton Bitel

Illustration: Laurene Boglio

# Athina Rachel Tsangari

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I only needed to see the poster for Attenberg to fall in love with Greek director Athina Rachel Tsangari. That still image: two women with skirts hitched up and hands wrapped underneath their crotches. They're standing in the glorious unification of sisterhood, a silent rebellion against the constraints of traditional femininity. And I fell for it, head over heels. Attenberg takes its name from a mispronunciation of Attenborough; as in famed English naturalist David. Marina's (Ariane Labed) fascination with his work comes from an identification with the animals she sees on screen. She finds comfort in the freedom they offer, where nature pays no notice to the feminine ideology that only mankind has ever thought to enforce. For Tsangari's women are fiercely physical; they spit, they wrestle, they crawl along the floor like panthers.



Tsangari's work is confrontational, a value which can also be seen in her surreal 2012 short work, *The Capsule*, which was commissioned by art collector Dakis Joannou. In both films, she presents patriarchy's greatest threat: the woman who remains relentlessly true to herself. Though Marina in *Attenberg* may fear sex, struggling even to utter the word, she is untouched by those virginal notions of shame and silence. In her eyes, she's the bohemian loner Françoise Hardy sings of in 'Tous Les Garçon et Les Filles'; the final loss of her virginity is similarly undertaken with all the bravado of a pioneer. She bears her naked body without hesitation and asks her lover incessant questions; not because she feels at fault, but because she's eager to explore that strange jungle of womanhood. Tsangari has another movie called *Chevalier* in the can, and it has been co-written by Efthymis Filippou, who has collaborated on the scripts for every film by Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos.

Clarisse Loughrey

Illustration: weloveyoyo

# Julia Loktev

Having only directed two films, Russian-American filmmaker Julia Loktev has already established herself as a master of the wordless dramatic moment. Quiet, intense passages of emotional tumult are what initially drew me to the director's 2005 anti-thriller *Day Night Day Night*. It's an impressively minimalist debut that follows a newly recruited suicide bomber being prepped for an attack on a tourist destination in New York City. Despite the powder-keg subject matter, Loktev manages to convey a consistent sense of ambiguity in relation to the characters' fluctuating motivations. The unnamed lead character called She (played with staggering intensity by Luisa Williams) spends elongated sequences emoting purely through subtle facial expressions. Loktev provides very little in the way of her backstory, family life and terrorist beginnings, instead dropping the viewer into a tense procedural that toes the line between genre thriller and art house curio.

Masked men arrive and provide intricate instructions on how to carry out the attack. These interiors are numbing and exhausting; Loktev pushes Williams' character through a gauntlet of repetitive endurance tests. We often have to rely on her eyes to establish whether or not she is going insane. These scenes draw their power from a resistance to judgment. It's never quite clear where the main character will end up, even as she heads into Times Square and grapples with failure and doubt. *Day Night Day Night* is a film about the blurred lines between ideology and experience, and throughout the course of its thorny narrative, we see just how contradictory the two can be. Loktev's follow-up, the epic relationship drama *The Loneliest Planet*, feels at once more gimmicky and less audacious than its predecessor. Still, it retains the director's keen understanding of how a single second can ultimately define a lifetime. **Glenn Heath Jr**

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# Chantal Akerman

I fell in love with Chantal Akerman somewhere between East Germany and Moscow. Not literally, of course, though it may as well be, so evocative and transportive is her 1993 masterpiece *D'Est*. Essentially a visual diary of the Belgian director's travels across the former European communist bloc, the film (whose title translates as 'From the East') in many ways encapsulates the many modes and methodologies with which Akerman worked throughout the most prolific phase of her career (which this work could further be said to mark the end of). Composed primarily of meditative tracking shots captured as sequenced tableaux through unidentified urban and countryside locales, *D'Est* documents with an outsider's eye a very specific moment of cultural transition, as the thaw of the Cold War opened to a newly liberated, modern iteration of Soviet society.

Like many of Akerman's films, the politics of *D'Est* are embedded in the contextual details of its production, or felt in the margins of the narrative, rather than explicated in traditional storytelling terms. She's one of the most political filmmakers I know, and yet not a single one of her films is about politics, or an overriding issue, or anything so blatantly topical. She approaches her subjects from a variety of (usually fixed) angles, often choosing to simply observe activities and the incidental development of the resultant dramas. Her most celebrated film, 1975's *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, is a three-hour-plus domestic diorama wherein the title character, a single mother, attends to routine household duties while prostituting herself between tasks to provide for her and her son. Nothing much is made of these circumstances — not the peeling of potatoes, nor the servicing of local businessmen — and even less is pronounced in the film's rigorous mise-en-scène. And yet few films carry such cumulative impact or offer such a pointed, nuanced articulation of feminine autonomy.

Akerman's style is modernist in its temporal conceptualisation yet somehow almost classical in its negotiation of physical and geographic space. A number of her films — including 1972's *Hôtel Monterey*, 1977's *News from Home* and *D'Est* — are about actual places, and as such stand as uniquely first-person meditations on public environments. But if the formalist frameworks and mundane nature of her chosen settings seem to suggest static cinematic experiences, Akerman's best work manages to generate an internal dynamism wherein narrative and aesthetic economy work toward locating a nascent power in the actualities of our everyday surroundings. Whether working in fiction or documentary, this elemental strategy elicits similarly involving, lingering effects. Thus, an essay film such as *News from Home* is rendered of equally intimate, perspicacious vision as 1994's nostalgic coming-of-age chronicle *Portrait of a Young Girl at the End of the 1960s in Brussels* — and is just as personal as a result. Akerman hasn't been as productive in recent years, producing only a single feature, the sterling 2011 Joseph Conrad adaptation *Almayer's Folly*, in the last decade. But as that Malaysia-set, '50s-era psychodrama re-attests, when she does return, it will be with a fully realised sense of time, place and self-possession.

Jordan Cronk





# Elaine May

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I fell in love with Elaine May for the hundredth time when I went on YouTube to search out a speech she gave in 2010 in honour of her eternal comedy partner Mike Nichols' American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement award. Taking the stage in front of a black-tie crowd that included Steven Spielberg, Shirley MacLaine, and any number of other luminaries, the 68-year old May gave a seven-minute master class in the art of the comic monologue – a brilliantly paced and delivered stream-of-consciousness routine to equal any of the skits she'd crafted decades earlier with the evening's honoree at her side. "This is a very emotional night for me," she began. "Because 10, 20, 30 years ago tonight... I bought this dress. I bought it for Mike's first lifetime achievement award."

Elaine is no stranger to lifetime achievement awards herself: in 2012, she was given the American National Medal of Arts, which is selected by the National Endowment for the Arts and bestowed, in person, by the President of the United States. I somehow doubt that Barack Obama has seen 1987's *Ishtar*, but the official state recognition of May's contributions to American culture was satisfying nonetheless, because the woman – and I say this as a Canadian observer – is a national treasure.

Leaving aside her huge contributions to the development of American sketch comedy in the '50s and '60s or her accomplishments as a playwright, actress, and screenwriter for hire (depending on who you believe, she was the prime mover behind *Tootsie*), each of the four feature films that May directed between 1971 and 1987 – the *annus horribilis* of *Ishtar*, a you'll-never-eat-lunch-in-this-town-again debacle if there ever was one – has something rich to recommend it. 1971's *A New Leaf* features May directing herself in a leading role as a dowdy heiress whose new husband (Walter Matthau) means to murder her on a camping trip – it's a bleakly incisive study of male vanity and vulnerability with a happy ending that feels purposefully tacked on, less a case of artistically softened compromise than the final twist of the satirist's knife.

The basic idea of a man hoping to rid himself of the woman he's married to also animates May's 1972 masterpiece *The Heartbreak Kid*, which feels no less personal despite the fact that it was written by somebody else (Neil Simon) and featured May's daughter Jeannie Berlin in a part that Mom might have played a decade earlier – an obviously unbearable young bride whose husband (Charles Grodin) falls out of love with her the moment he spies a cool blonde (Cybil Shepard) on the beach at their honeymoon spot and then endeavours to let his wife down gently. The sequence where Grodin breaks the bad news to a sun-burned Berlin over a romantic dinner (right before the arrival of the "yummy-yum pecan pie") feels like the primal scene of the embarrassment-comedy that currently reigns supreme in American film and television, except that May keeps the camera – and the tone – focused on the bruised humanity of the jilted party. And the film nails its punchline: Grodin's Lenny gets the girl and

his comeuppance simultaneously, the Jewish striver ensnared in the WASP's nest. Not even 1967's *The Graduate* concluded on such a finely struck note of upper-middle class ambivalence.

May's greatness as a director of actors is front and centre in *Mikey and Nicky*, a tragicomic duet between John Cassavetes and Peter Falk as two pals living out a dark night of the soul in each others' alternately cozy and contemptuous company; May allegedly agonised over the edit, but even if the painstakingly drab visual style suggests an anxiety of influence connected to Cassavetes – May was an avowed fan of her fellow improvisational innovator – the comic interplay between the characters feels so natural that it vindicates the quasi-documentary aesthetic. As in *A New Leaf* and *The Heartbreak Kid*, May manages the nifty trick of making a movie about men that respects their perspectives without necessarily privileging them: the difference between *Mikey and Nicky* and Cassavetes's *Husbands* is that it's geared more towards observation than indulgence – a distinction that doesn't undermine the earlier film so much as point up May's carefully calibrated ambivalence to the material.

If *Mikey and Nicky* led to rumours that May was easily frazzled as a filmmaker, *Ishtar*, produced a decade later at the behest of star Warren Beatty (who plays one half of a cheesy singer-songwriter team with Dustin Hoffman) and snatched away from May in the editing room, cinched the image of her as a ~~low~~-fi comedienne in over her head in a ruthless Hollywood technocracy. *Ishtar* went over time, over budget and under the bar, box-office wise, to the point where it became a national punch-line: it goes on the list with *Heaven's Gate* and *Bonfire of the Vanities* as movies that made public scrutiny of budgets and production woes a modern spectator sport. And it's too bad, because it's actually a pretty adroit comedy about homely (but not ugly) Americans abroad, becoming prominent figures in a Middle Eastern civil war and ultimately winding up revolutionary heroes – a gentle allegory of showbiz imperialism that looks both sharper and more political with a few decades' worth of hindsight.

The longview proves flattering to a figure like May, a legit hipster heroine who endured at her peril past the first blush of celebrity to the point of seeming out of touch with her successors, and then into the cozy role of beloved elder stateswoman – not that she's become innocuous. May's speech at the AFI dinner was hilariously funny because of her ever-industrious comic mind – she framed the whole thing around the idea that Nichols and Albert Einstein were distant relatives – and rousing because there wasn't a trace of peer-group pandering in it. The look in her eyes was that of a hungry young comic looking for a kill, which is why the grace note near the end also managed to be moving. She was invoking Albert Einstein, she said, because he was a genius, and so was her old friend and partner, Mike Nichols. Takes one to know one, I say.

Adam Nayman

Illustration: Oliver Stafford



I fell in love with Claire Denis the moment in 1996's *Nenette et Boni* when the rhythmic kneading of pizza dough turned into outright masturbation. Denis regular Grégoire Colin plays a pizza maker who lusts for a nearby baker, and one day the act of pounding out flour gets too suggestively overwhelming to ignore. It's a great moment because it left me hanging as a viewer: one moment I was wondering if my overheated teen brain was leaping to polymorphously perverse conclusions about the increasingly frantic slapping sounds onscreen, the next moment I knew that I actually hadn't overreached.

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Claire

Sex is a near-constant in Denis' work; though a filmmaker not generally typecast as an erotic provocateur à la Larry Clark, her characters are constantly negotiating new, sometimes disturbing sexual boundaries, oscillating between the warmly reassuring and coldly withholding. This is exemplified in the A/B-side one-two punch of 2001's *Trouble Every Day* and 2002's *Friday Night*. Given that Gaspar Noé this year graced Cannes with a proudly porn-esque production with a semen-drenched poster, it's hard to retroactively comprehend the stir *Trouble* caused upon its release to a wave of – in retrospect (and then, honestly) – parodically over-the-top press about the film's presumably boundary-pushing graphic nature, including gruesome, Savini-calibre flesh eating and an honest-to-goodness cum shot.

It's the potentially uncontrollable fierceness of revved-up carnality that makes the film unnerving rather than just a bunch of gory make-up effects. *Trouble*'s title can be taken quite literally, possibly referring to its vampiric characters (Vincent Gallo and Béatrice Dalle), whose unquenchable drives have homicidal results, but the metaphor translates pretty well beyond their specific cases. Sex itself isn't the demon (nor is the familiar metaphor of vampirism as STD the operating concern), but its management is trouble every day.

*Friday Night* is a gentler companion film about a one-night stand; unusually, no one is punished by the plot for an anonymous hotel room liaison between a man and woman who've never met before, prompted by nothing more than directionless lust and a night's rest sought in a temporary domicile while waiting out a ridiculous traffic jam. No diseases are acquired, no vengeful spouses or partners intervene, and neither party turns out to be an obsessive stalker. Sex is routinely a signifier or prompt for pathology on screen, but not inherently so in Denis' work: it

can be a source of temporary pleasure or a seriously addictive problem, but one never gets that icky sense from her films that someone behind the camera is recoiling at having to film this. Her longtime collaboration with DoP Agnès Godard is a big assist, with characteristically probingly intimate close-ups over bodies rendering them as unfamiliar, craggy and mysteriously textured as the surface of the moon.

It's difficult to describe Denis' work without simply collating the most commonly used modifiers thrown at her. Many catch-all clichés do in fact apply directly to her work, which is unavoidably "sensual" (all that skin being slid over, endless dance sequences in which romantic attractions are wordlessly negotiated) and "intimate," often restricting its focus to small one-on-one interactions or manageable gatherings. This can create interesting tonal paradoxes: 1994's *I Can't Sleep* is ostensibly structured around a serial killer on the loose in Paris, but in practice it's no less relaxed and soothing than *Friday Night*.

This isn't to ignore Denis' occasional angry streak. Both 2004's *The Intruder* and 2013's *Bastards* are intricately structured to the point of the unparsably fractured; in the latter case, the narrative is made extra-unwelcoming by an especially unpleasant act of sexual brutality. (A tip of the hat to Faulkner's 'Sanctuary', but unnecessarily strong medicine indeed.) Nor is Denis' lyrical patience necessarily cause to label her work as somehow representatively "feminine," an idea which makes the director bristle in interviews.

Denis

This occasional cold streak keeps Denis' work far away from the realm of gross sentimentality, and her off-screen pragmatism and in-interview analytical acumen add to my respect for her. The second time I fell in love with Claire Denis is when she came to do a Q&A during my undergraduate years at NYU for a pathetically under-attended screening of *Beau Travail*. One of the students proceeded to ask one of the standard, generic questions of uninspiring Q&As, phrased in the weakest way possible: he wanted to make movies and realise his dreams without compromise, and did she have any advice? No one's fool, Denis essentially dismissed his question as nonsense, slowly and (im)patiently explaining that in order to keep making movies, you have to have realistic budgets and make sure your investors are paid back. Her movies may represent an extreme end in personal work of frankly marginal interest to much of the filmgoing public, but she knows exactly how to keep working.

# CHEAT SHEET

# 100 GREAT MOVIES

- ☐ 1. **Falling Leaves** (Alice Guy-Blaché, 1912)
- ☐ 2. **Suspense** (Lois Weber, 1913)
- ☐ 3. **The Adventures of Prince Achmed** (Lotte Reiniger, 1926)
- ☐ 4. **The Seashell and the Clergyman** (Germaine Dulac, 1928)
- ☐ 5. **Triumph of the Will** (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)
- ☐ 6. **Meshes of the Afternoon** (Maya Deren, 1943)
- ☐ 7. **Death Is A Caress** (Edith Carlmar, 1949)
- ☐ 8. **A Portrait of Ga** (Margaret Tait, 1952)
- ☐ 9. **The Hitch-Hiker** (Ida Lupino, 1953)
- ☐ 10. **The Connection** (Shirley Clarke, 1962)
- ☐ 11. **Something Different** (Vera Chytilová, 1963)
- ☐ 12. **The House Is Black** (Forugh Farrokhzad, 1963)
- ☐ 13. **Brief Encounters** (Kira Muratova, 1967)
- ☐ 14. **I Am Somebody** (Madeline Anderson, 1970)
- ☐ 15. **The Arch** (Cecile Tang, 1970)
- ☐ 16. **Wanda** (Barbara Loden, 1970)
- ☐ 17. **Terminal Island** (Stephanie Rothman, 1973)
- ☐ 18. **Double Agent 73** (Doris Wishman, 1974)
- ☐ 19. **India Song** (Margeritte Duras, 1975)
- ☐ 20. **Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles** (Chantal Akerman, 1975)
- ☐ 21. **Seven Beauties** (Lina Wertmüller, 1975)
- ☐ 22. **Harlan County, USA** (Barbara Koppel, 1976)
- ☐ 23. **The Ascent** (Larisa Shepitko, 1977)
- ☐ 24. **Girlfriends** (Claudia Weil, 1978)
- ☐ 25. **The Second Awakening Of Christa Klages** (Margarethe von Trotta, 1978)
- ☐ 26. **Chilly Scenes of Winter** (Joan Micklin Silver, 1979)
- ☐ 27. **Old Boyfriends** (Joan Tewkesbury, 1979)
- ☐ 28. **Germany Pale Mother** (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1980)
- ☐ 29. **Freak Orlando** (Ulrike Ottinger, 1981)
- ☐ 30. **Born In Flames** (Lizzie Borden, 1983)
- ☐ 31. **Valley Girl** (Martha Coolidge, 1983)
- ☐ 32. **Desperately Seeking Susan** (Susan Seidelman, 1985)
- ☐ 33. **Vagabond** (Agnès Varda, 1985)
- ☐ 34. **Ishtar** (Elaine May, 1987)
- ☐ 35. **Big** (Penny Marshall, 1988)
- ☐ 36. **Boat People** (Ann Hui, 1988)
- ☐ 37. **Celia** (Ann Turner, 1989)
- ☐ 38. **Pet Semetary** (Mary Lambert, 1989)
- ☐ 39. **Daughters of the Dust** (Julie Dash, 1991)
- ☐ 40. **Dogfight** (Nancy Savoca, 1991)
- ☐ 41. **Orlando** (Sally Potter, 1992)
- ☐ 42. **Wayne's World** (Penelope Spheeris, 1992)
- ☐ 43. **My Brilliant Career** (Gillian Armstrong, 1994)
- ☐ 44. **Billy Madison** (Tamra Davis, 1995)
- ☐ 45. **Strange Days** (Kathryn Bigelow, 1996)
- ☐ 46. **Clueless** (Amy Heckerling, 1995)
- ☐ 47. **Home For The Holidays** (Jodie Foster, 1995)
- ☐ 48. **Fire** (Deepa Metha, 1996)

# by FEMALE DIRECTORS

## RULES

- Photocopy this page twice
- Keep one, give one to friend
- Watch the films
- Tick them off
- Frame

- ☐ 49. **Grace of My Heart** (Allison Anders, 1996)
- ☐ 50. **Divorce Iranian Style** (Kim Longinotto, 1998)
- ☐ 51. **The Apple** (Samira Makhmalbaf, 1998)
- ☐ 52. **Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl** (Joan Chen, 1998)
- ☐ 53. **Beau Travail** (Claire Denis, 1999)
- ☐ 54. **Ravenous** (Antonia Bird, 1999)
- ☐ 55. **Boys Don't Cry** (Kimberly Peirce, 1999)
- ☐ 56. **American Psycho** (Mary Harron, 2000)
- ☐ 57. **Faithless** (Liv Ullmann, 2000)
- ☐ 58. **A Ma Soeur!** (Catherine Breillat, 2001)
- ☐ 59. **Me and You and Everyone We Know**
- ☐ 60. **In My Skin** (Marina de Van, 2002) <sup>(Miranda July, 2001)</sup>
- ☐ 61. **Morvern Callar** (Lynne Ramsay, 2002)
- ☐ 62. **Whale Rider** (Niki Caro, 2002)
- ☐ 63. **Lost in Translation** (Sofia Coppola, 2003)
- ☐ 64. **Innocence** (Lucile Hadzihalilovic, 2004)
- ☐ 65. **I For India** (Sandhya Suri, 2005)
- ☐ 66. **Lovely and Amazing** (Nichole Holofcener, 2005)
- ☐ 67. **Longing** (Valeska Grisebach, 2006)
- ☐ 68. **Eve's Bayou** (Kasi Lemmons, 2007)
- ☐ 69. **Lourdes** (Jessica Hausner, 2007)
- ☐ 70. **XXY** (Lucia Puenzo, 2007)
- ☐ 71. **The Headless Woman** (Lucrecia Martel, 2008)
- ☐ 72. **Treeless Mountain** (So Yong Kim, 2008)
- ☐ 73. **Wendy and Lucy** (Kelly Reichardt, 2008)
- ☐ 74. **Bright Star** (Jane Campion, 2009)

- ☐ 75. **Craneway Event** (Tacita Dean, 2009)
- ☐ 76. **Double Tide** (Sharon Lockhart, 2009)
- ☐ 77. **Everyone Else** (Maren Ade, 2009)
- ☐ 78. **An Education** (Lone Scherfig, 2009)
- ☐ 79. **Fish Tank** (Andrea Arnold, 2009)
- ☐ 80. **The Milk of Sorrow** (Claudia Llosa, 2009)
- ☐ 81. **Archipelago** (Joanna Hogg, 2010)
- ☐ 82. **Attenberg** (Athina Rachel Tsangari, 2010)
- ☐ 83. **The Arbor** (Clio Barnard, 2010)
- ☐ 84. **Winters Bone** (Deborah Granick, 2010)
- ☐ 85. **Nana** (Valérie Massadian, 2011)
- ☐ 86. **One. Two. One.** (Mania Akbari, 2011)
- ☐ 87. **The Loneliest Planet** (Julia Loktev, 2011)
- ☐ 88. **Tomboy** (Céline Sciamma, 2011)
- ☐ 89. **Dreams of a Life** (Carol Morley, 2012)
- ☐ 90. **Sister** (Ursula Meier, 2012)
- ☐ 91. **Stories We Tell** (Sarah Polley, 2012)
- ☐ 92. **Wadjda** (Haifaa al-Mansour, 2012)
- ☐ 93. **A Thousand Suns** (Mati Diop, 2013)
- ☐ 94. **Butter on the Latch** (Josephine Decker, 2013)
- ☐ 95. **Appropriate Behaviour** (Desiree Akhavan, 2014)
- ☐ 96. **Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project**
- ☐ 97. **Eden** (Mia Hansen-Løve, 2014) <sup>(Jodie Mack, 2014)</sup>
- ☐ 98. **Selma** (Ava DuVernay, 2014)
- ☐ 99. **Rocks in My Pockets** (Signe Baumane, 2014)
- ☐ 100. **The Babadook** (Jennifer Kent, 2014)

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# Inside Pixar

*LWLies* reports from the beguiling Bay Area basecamp of one of the world titans of feature animation.

Unless the name on your business card reads ‘Commander Chris Hadfield,’ chances are your office isn’t half as cool as that of the 1,200 or so employees at Pixar Animation Studios. Nestled among the workshops and warehouses that make up the industrial sector of Emeryville, California, the birthplace of Woody, Buzz and co is a leafy, state-of-the-art campus that features an outdoor swimming pool, basketball court, on-site gym facilities and a free all-you-can-eat cereal bar. A 22-acre plot of prime commercial real estate that was once the site of the Del Monte fruit canning factory, nowadays 1200 Park Avenue is famous for producing something even sweeter. Yet while it’s easy to be seduced by the sights and smells that greet you upon entering the grounds of this pristine dream factory – the unconditionally friendly staff, the freshly cut grass – scratch the surface and you begin to notice a different aspect of life inside Pixar.

“It’s not all flowers and sweet smells here – people worry about stuff sometimes,” Pixar mainstay Pete Docter tells *LWLies*. “We’ve only ever had one serious round of layoffs, but we’ve had enough success over the years to propel us in the right direction.” Those cuts, which coincided with the announcement in September 2013 that *The Good Dinosaur* was being pushed back 18 months following the removal of director Bob Peterson from the project, affected five per cent of Pixar’s workforce and served as a stark reminder to everyone within the company of the fiscal pressure that comes with running a film studio. Docter is quick to stress that he and his fellow employees are largely shielded from everyday commercial concerns, but point outs that preserving a healthy creative culture at Pixar is only possible because of the tireless efforts of its Hawaiian shirt-collecting CCO, John Lasseter. “His work ethic is unlike anyone I’ve ever met. Honestly, I don’t know how he does it. John lives the life of 12 ordinary people all at once and yet still is the first one to wake in the morning and the first one to take on new challenges. He just has an intuitive sense of what’s going to work for the business.”

Along with Lasseter, Andrew Stanton and the late Joe Ranft, Docter is a founding member of the ‘Brain Trust’, a now-extended yet relatively small group of thought leaders who oversee development on all Pixar projects. Having joined Pixar as a wide-eyed college graduate in 1990, becoming only its tenth employee and third resident animator, Docter has gone on to direct three of the studio’s 15 completed feature films to date: 2001’s *Monsters, Inc.*, 2009’s *Up* and this year’s *Inside Out*. During his time at the company, Docter has seen it grow from a plucky startup operating out of a modest rental space in Marin County just north of San Francisco – back when Pixar was still in its first major transitional phase following its

breakaway from Lucasfilm – into one of the world’s most cherished (not to mention lucrative) film studios.

Perhaps the most significant change occurred in 2006 when Pixar’s then CEO, Steve Jobs, negotiated a deal that saw The Walt Disney Company purchase Pixar for a cool \$7.4 billion. Docter recalls being in a fairly relaxed mood when the news broke: “I was actually at Disneyland onboard the Riverboat when I got a call from [president of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios] Ed Catmull,” he says. “This was before they announced it to the company, so it came as something of a shock.” Was he at all nervous about how Pixar’s future might be affected? “A little, sure. But when Steve sold the company he wrote into the contract that there were certain things which Disney was not allowed to mess with. And really, when you think about it, gee, they spent \$7 billion, so they’re not going to come in and change everything overnight. But fortunately they weren’t interested in disrupting what we were doing. They just wanted a piece of what we had.”

It’s fascinating to chart the respective trajectories of these sister animation studios since that historic acquisition. Where Disney has undergone something of a mini renaissance following the global successes of *Tangled*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Frozen* and *Big Hero 6*, Pixar has to some extent struggled to live up to its own impossibly high standards, producing numerous sequels that failed to connect with audiences on the same level as earlier hits like *Finding Nemo* and *Wall-E*. Other studios have upped their game, too. While DreamWorks has been busy winning auds’ hearts and minds with the *How to Train Your Dragon* films, Universal saw 2013’s *Despicable Me 2* outperform Pixar’s *Monsters University* at the domestic box office to the tune of \$100 million – this despite the former being made for just \$76 million (compared with *MU*’s \$200 million) and within a more economic timeframe.

With the competition fiercer than ever before, another studio might be tempted to increase its output in a bid to put some distance between itself and the chasing pack. Not Pixar. “A Pixar movie takes about four to five years to make,” explains *Up* and *Inside Out* producer Jonas Rivera, who’s been with the studio since 1994. “We’ve reached a point now with the technology where it’s hard to see how things are ever going to get faster in terms of the animation. But our goal isn’t necessarily to make movies faster. I would like to, because that means we’d be able to tell more stories, but it’s important that we continue to do things our own way.”

Rivera is a cool customer with an infectious enthusiasm for his work. If he does ever feel the heat, he certainly doesn’t show it. However, as a producer, he acknowledges that the weight of responsibility rests partly on his shoulders. “My whole job is to get the film out to an




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**“We don’t see animation as a genre. I hope there comes a time when people see it as we see it, which is just as movies.”**

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audience, but when you reach that point there’s a certain reluctance that kicks in. You put everything you’ve got into something for so long and you want people to like it, but it’s never a done thing.” He continues, before dispelling the notion of any rivalry between Pixar and Disney. “Down here in the trenches of making the films there’s no bad blood between us and them. At the end of the day it’s just business. We want Pixar to do well, we want Disney to do well. In fact, I’m friends with a lot of the animators over there, we even share notes from time to time. It’s the same with DreamWorks – director to director, producer to producer, animator to animator, it’s a pretty supportive network. Of course, it helps that I admire so much of the work these guys are doing. Even in my house, I’ll say to my kids, ‘Do you guys wanna watch *Ratatouille*?’ and they’ll say, ‘No, we wanna watch *The Lego Movie*.’”

Perhaps the most noticeable common trait among Pixar employees is an appreciation for all types of animation, not just the computer-generated kind. “I love traditional hand-drawn animation,” Rivera says, “one of my favourite animators right now is Tamm Moore. Another is David O’Reilly, he makes some of the craziest stuff I’ve ever seen but I find it really beautiful. Ultimately, I want to make movies that people grow up with, just in the same way that I grew up with *Peter Pan*. When you spend a big chunk of your life on something you want that to have an impact on people, to be an important part of their life, their children’s lives. My two kids used to really love Miffy the Bunny – they’re nine and six now, so they don’t watch Miffy so much these days. But it’s funny because we were

cleaning out some of the kids’ old toys recently and when I went to throw out the Miffy the Bunny house they said, ‘No, no, no, no! Dad, that’s *Miffy the Bunny*’s house, we want it!’ That’s so cool, you know, it’s already a part of their childhood and it really means something to them. It’s corny, but that’s what I want from the movies we make. I want a kid to not want to give up their *Inside Out* DVD or toy.”

With three feature films scheduled for release in the next 12 months – *Inside Out*, *The Good Dinosaur* and *Finding Dory* – and *Toy Story 4* also in development, Pixar looks well placed to build on its extraordinary legacy. But when *LW Lies* enquires as to where the future of animated storytelling lies, the conversation gets even more self-analytical. As Docter reflects: “On the first *Toy Story*, we settled on that particular subject matter because, whether we liked it or not, everything looked like plastic. So we decided it was best to just embrace that. Since then we’ve been able to do fur and organic cloth, and on *Inside Out* we’ve been able to create characters who are a lot more fluid and loose, almost like they’re hand-drawn. But in terms of the actual stories we’ve told, sometimes I feel like we’re stuck a little bit in our own format. We make the films that we ourselves would want to see, but that’s according to the same group of people who’ve been here now for 20 odd years. So I’m not sure that we’ve really pushed animation as far as we could or maybe should have, but I hope that we’ll continue to challenge people’s perceptions of what a Pixar film is.”

“I think about *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* a lot,” adds Rivera. “If you watch the four Disney movies leading up to that – *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Lady and the Tramp* and *Sleeping Beauty* – it sticks out like a sore thumb. It doesn’t feel like a Disney movie – there’s voice over, the music’s different, it *looks* different. I can’t lie, I do crave something like that for us. We had that when Brad Bird was brought in on *The Incredibles*. I remember early on sitting watching the story reels for the first time, someone mentioned *Pulp Fiction*, something about how it’s a movie made up of shots that would normally be cut out of the movie. That’s kind of how *The Incredibles* felt. We’re constantly looking to rekindle that, while still making family entertainment that’s on-brand.” Amid all this introspection, Rivera admits that there’s an even greater challenge facing Pixar, one which could be viewed as being beyond the reach of any one film studio. “We don’t see animation as a genre,” he says with just a hint of defiance. “I hope there comes a time when people see animation as we see it, which is just as movies. I remember being at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009 with *Up*, that felt like a watershed moment for us and animation in general. I was looking over my shoulder at the Pedro Almodóvars and Michael Hanekes and it felt crazy that we were there, but at the same time it also felt like we fully deserved to be there. World cinema accepted us to the table for a minute and we wanted another taste.”

Rivera and Docter got a second helping in May when *Inside Out* premiered in Cannes to widespread critical acclaim. Twenty years after *Toy Story* first introduced us to the awesome capabilities of computer animation, the studio’s latest crowning achievement literally takes audiences on a journey inside the human mind to reaffirm the power of imagination. It is Pixar’s most ambitious film to date and an emphatic response to those who voiced concerns about the studio’s direction following the slight dip in form that preceded *Toy Story 3*. But more than this, *Inside Out* proves that great art doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It is thanks in part to the resurgence of Disney, DreamWorks and the rest that Pixar continues to tell dazzling original stories on a spectacular scale while striving to push the boundaries of their preferred medium – what Brian Eno coined in 2009 as a ‘scenius’, whereby artistic trends emerge not through an individual’s contributions but through an ecology of talent. Pixar is no longer way out on its own, and that’s a good thing. Because the thriving cultural scene to which the studio belongs may one day engender the permanent shift in public consciousness it so desperately craves 🍷



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# Inside Out

Directed by

**PETE DOCTER**

**AND RONALDO DEL CARMEN**

Starring

**AMY POEHLER, KAITLYN DIAS,**

**PHYLLIS SMITH**

Released

**24 JULY**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*It's Pixar, so obviously looking forward to all the fun-time larks.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Blimey. Fun-time larks, and a serious exploration of child psychology.*

5

## IN RETROSPECT.

*So clever, so witty, so true. This one instantly drops into the Pixar top tier.*

**H**ave you ever wondered what scenes might unfold if your brain functions were anthropomorphised? What if instead of biological synapses controlling your state of mind, emotions – voiced by popular US actors – were constantly negotiating with each for dominance over your feelings? Which of your emotions would be the most vocal? What philosophical reasoning would it use to justify taking control? Which one would wear glasses?

In Pixar's growing pains drama, an 11-year-old girl's mind is animated with the same visual floridity as seen in 1971's *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. The innovation of chatty,

colour-coded emotions may sound like a child-courting flight of fancy, but the sophistication and thought that has gone into mapping out and evoking the mind speaks to any adult with an interest in psychology. *Inside Out* has the power to provide an alternative to the academic lexicon for talking about internal processes.

The 11-year-old is called Riley (Kaitlyn Dias) and a task-force of administrators populate her headspace, each trying to protect their host in different ways. Key emotions that dwell in headquarters, frowning over a control panel. Whichever one is in the driving seat at any given moment colours Riley's experience and also, crucially, her memories. Memory islands surround HQ – each one defined by one of Riley's key interests (Hockey Island, Family Island). There is the subconscious where troublemakers are sent, the longterm memory department where jaded bureaucrats Hoover up old phone numbers and a train of thought, which is prone to suddenly stopping. Interconnected internal structures are neatly labelled and metaphysically mocked ("These facts and opinions look so similar!").

The sharp wit of the writing and detailed imagery of the world-building combine in a way that provides endless surface delights and chuckles. Yet Pete Docter and Ronaldo del Carmen's film goes deeper and further, travelling in a focused arc from the brain's well-lit centre to its darkest reaches. *Inside Out* is about growing up and letting go of the simple joys of childhood. Memories in this film are, of course, palpable objects, taking the form of iridescent crystal ball-like orbs filled with images of Riley, her family and friends. They are colour-coded according to the overriding emotion they contain. Joy (Amy Poehler) is forever ticking off Sadness (Phyllis Smith) for touching yellow happy memories and turning them blue and sad. The emotional bickering is hilarious but the weight of a memory changing colour is immediately felt by Riley.

Like a constantly dipping and corkscrewing rollercoaster, the narrative inhabits the world

that Riley and her parents (Diane Lane and Kyle MacLachlan) move through as easily as the world within. At times it seems like she is at the mercy of her emotions and at others it's vice versa (to namecheck the film's working title). Her story unfolds at a time of transition. The family have exchanged Minnesota, the site of Riley's happy childhood, for San Francisco where her increasingly distracted father has been relocated for work.

When the film begins, before the move, Joy is head of the control panel and her yellow is all over the marble run-like memory bank. Sadness, Fear (Bill Hader), Anger (Lewis Black) and Disgust (Mindy Kaling) co-habit Headquarters with Joy who – in a desperate attempt to reverse the havoc that Sadness has begun wreaking on memories – goes on a mission through the mind to save happy memories from destruction. The irony is that in doing so she leaves the other emotions to navigate Riley in her new life in her new town.

Part fantastical quest, part emotional exploration and part sensory overload of animated brilliance, *Inside Out's* only weakness is that it deals in archetypes. Riley is less a person and more an aggregation of childhood norms. To wit, Riley's biggest fears are clowns and broccoli. Her imaginary boyfriend is floppy-haired teen heartthrob.

But this quibble barely has time to register because the marvellous existential factory is in the process of being demolished and rebuilt – isn't it always? The poignant sight of memory islands crumbling leaves Riley in a state of flux. There is no sentimental cushioning to this animated evocation of what it means to roll with the times. *Inside Out* is equally firm when it comes to providing a complex ending that gives hope but only within this newly expanded interior context.

It's also worth mentioning that during a brilliant coda, the film goes inside the mind of a cat, providing the best interpretation of the feline psyche that this writer has ever seen.

**SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN**





# Man with a Movie Camera (1929)

*Directed by*  
**DZIGA VERTOV**  
*Starring*  
**THE PEOPLE OF ODESSA**  
*Released*  
**1 JULY**

5

## ANTICIPATION.

*Critics recently voted this the greatest documentary of all-time. No pressure then.*

5

## ENJOYMENT.

*Fascinating enough as a social document, but genuinely thrilling in how its multifarious technical trickery whips up an ecstatically cinematic delirium.*

5

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Wow! Now you can see what the fuss was all about – and it feels good.*

Check out that bra clasp! As a young woman prepares herself for the day, she hooks together the most decoratively embroidered fasteners, bringing that extra bit of beauty to everyday functionality. Even in 1929, Russian avant-gardist Denis Arkadievitch Kaufman knew that when you pointed a camera at something, people regarded the subject with heightened interest and concentration. So his hand-cranked equipment goes everywhere – on top of buildings, attached to trams and motorbikes, in the factories and pubs, on the beach – asking us to look afresh at every human face, moving piston, and thronging street scene. The day-in-the-life ‘city-symphony’ was already a familiar sub-genre by the end of the ‘20s, but what was fresh then and holds up even now is the film’s insistence on not only knowing that you’re looking, but investigating what it means when the machinery of cinema changes our relationship with the world.

Of course, now we’re enveloped by moving images from myriad devices, we hardly give such questions a second thought. It’s easy to treat a Soviet-era silent classic like this as some sort of set-text duty, not something you’d watch for your own pleasure. Yet the keynote here is just how invigorating it is to return to the first principles of visual language in this foundation stone for modern cinema. No coincidence that the oldest of three Kaufman brothers took the name Dziga Vertov – meaning ‘spinning top’ – and buoyed by the experimentalism of the Revolutionary late-’20s (Rodchenko’s dynamically modernist photography and graphics work offer a key reference point),

he was determined to be more than an observer, delivering a cinema whose kinetic construction was energetically self-evident.

Vertov shows us everything you can do with a camera, creating double and triple exposures, split screen, freeze frames and slow motion. Yet he’s interested in more than formal possibilities, suggesting cinema’s capacity for social commentary (cutting from abject beggars to the frolicking bourgeoisie), education (see how these machines work) and indeed voyeurism (from boudoir jollies to seaside body count). Above all, he’s super-excited by the power of editing, out doing Sergei Eisenstein for punch and drive in motoric rhythms which almost seem to prefigure modern house music in their driving build-up through trancey repetition towards ecstatic quadruple-time release. A release in which everyone has their part to play, as laid out in the climactic sequence incorporating an audience watching this very film in a cinema, the editor piecing the sequence together and the eye of the camera lens which shot the footage. Not only does this rapid-fire montage suggest – for 1929 at least – the viewers’ newly developing sensory consciousness, but it’s also a tremendously upbeat vision of cinema as a shared enterprise, a democratic medium where we’re all in it together. Too naive, in retrospect? Maybe, but as you enjoy this newly minted digital restoration, replete with Alloy Orchestra’s appropriately head-banging, metal-bashing score, it’s still enriching to be treated as an equal, rather than just another consumer opening wide for another spoonful of product.

**TREVOR JOHNSTON**



# Dear White People

Directed by

**JUSTIN SIMIEN**

Starring

**TESSA THOMPSON,  
TYLER JAMES WILLIAMS,  
BRANDON P BELL**

Released

**10 JULY**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*A crowdfunding darling that promises to put race front and centre with humour and attitude.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Empathetic, witty, socially aware and visually bright variation on a theme.*

3

## IN RETROSPECT.

*As enjoyable and refreshing as it is, there's a certain bite lacking in the delivery.*

So long as American white people tiptoe around appropriating black people swagger, and blacks grit their teeth at insensitive microaggressions, so will the gravity of an unequal society be undermined by an implication that the black experience is a minstrelsy sideshow. And so will there be an audience wanting a release valve in the form of a movie like *Dear White People*, which set off an Indiegogo firestorm with its blithe, pointed concept trailer. “Dear white people,” its radio DJ announced, “the minimum requirement of black friends now needed to not seem racist has just been raised to two.” “Dear white people – stop petting my hair.”

The crowdfunding campaign for writer-director Justin Simien’s debut hung its hat on those confrontational proclamations, hinting at a gleeful college-campus satire flinging pies in complacently privileged faces. The film, however, is more delicately lower-key, and shares with Spike Lee’s *School Daze* a desire to investigate contradictions and difficulties in crafting and navigating one’s identity as an ambitious black youth. Samantha (Tessa Thompson), the DJ and film student who promises to “put the black back,” faces accusations of overcompensating for her mixed-race background. Her student politics rival Troy (Bell) feels pressure to conform to aspirant grooming, and makes tainted deals with white fraternities, while living a secret life of sneaking to the bathroom to “smoke weed and write jokes.” Scrapes are covered in the college newspaper by Lionel (Tyler James Williams), a gay, nerdy, put-upon scribe whose desire not to be pigeonholed makes him seem dubiously unallied. Coco (Teyonah

Parris) is the glam, straight-hair mirror of Sam’s Afro revolutionary – instead of resisting, her image fluidly conforms to get ahead, whether flirting with rants to gain YouTube hits or turning a blind eye to racism to go with the establishment flow.

*Dear White People* begins with a redistricting plan that’s designed to break up a black housing block and builds to a climax in which the snotty white fraternity throws a shocking blackface party, yet it still doesn’t feel like a movie that holds whites to account. Rather it’s a bittersweet reflection on the self-immolating identity crises black people go through when up against a culture that patronises them – how their public personas are strategies, how they privately have mixed-race affairs, how they code-switch.

On the plus side, that makes *Dear White People* a comedy explicit about the topic of race, peppered with casual asides like, “Don’t worry, the negro at the door isn’t going to rape you.” If it’s less focused than the righteous sketch humour of *Hollywood Shuffle*, it is still witty, and Simien’s visual style is smooth and accessible, with a warm mahogany grade and a grace to the structure of chapter intertitles and tableaux vivants. Yet, this is a college film that eschews intellectual or historical referencing for spoon-feeding, alternating from sharp cracks to toothless, soft-edged slop like, “You’re more Banksy than Barack.” And after Ferguson, Tamir Rice, the Eric Garner verdict, and so much other recent intensification in the climate of American race relations, the slick relativism about blacks’ own role in the machinery of black stereotyping feels not quite a vital enough note to rise to the title. **IAN MANTGANI**



# 45 Years

Directed by

**ANDREW HAIGH**

Starring

**CHARLOTTE RAMPLING,**

**TOM COURTENAY,**

**GERALDINE JAMES**

Released

**28 AUGUST**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*Will Andrew Haigh give older folks the naturalistic relationship drama they deserve?.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Feels like a story that was whirring long before the film began.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Dense with insight and caution on how to live a long life with love.*

**A**ndrew Haigh burst into the film world in 2011 with *Weekend*, a naturalistic chronicle of two twenty-something men whose one-night stand morphs into a meaningful connection. His follow up, adapted from 'In Another Country', a short story by David Constantine, is a deep-rooted depiction of intimacy that follows the everyday mechanics of love, laying bare its side-effect of vulnerability. This time the couple are, respectively, in their late sixties and seventies, creating the extra thematic layer of how the passing of time – and the prospect of more passing of time – shapes individual concerns within relationships. Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay as Kate and Geoff Mercer are a screen couple for eternity, substantiated by friendship, kindness and the easy mockery that comes with comfortable cohabitation. They live in a cottage on the Norfolk Broads, childless but with a dog that Kate walks every morning. She strides by fields with the air of a woman in sync with life's releases. She returns home to find Geoff – who is older and more housebound – staring agog at a letter written in German.

The film begins on a Monday. On the coming Saturday, the couple are planning a party to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. It's an overdue festivity, delayed by Geoff's medical complications, and intended as a sweet autumnal highlight before the decay of winter sets in. But before the party, the information in the letter causes a crater to open between the couple, spitting out questions that causes conflict in an engagingly natural and increasingly disturbing style, creating a seismic shift in the plates that underpin their domestic bliss.

The letter communicates that a body has been found belonging to Geoff's old flame, Katia, whom he knew 50 years ago, before he ever met Kate. Old relationships are not infidelity unless a partner is living in the past. *45 Years* shows a man pulling away from his surroundings to become lost in time. Is this prompted by unresolved feelings for Katia or is he nostalgic for his youth? This single melodramatic event functions as a perfect metaphor. Katia's body has been preserved by ice in the ravine where she fell. She is forever 27, like a dead Dorian Gray taunting Geoff in his handsome but white-haired and bloated form.

Rampling's piercing eyes and physical alertness add calculating layers to a character patiently tending to a shocked spouse. As Geoff shuts her out by taking puffs on the drug of memory, Kate's autopilot loyalty is challenged by doubts that overwhelm her like music filling a room. A scene in the loft amid a whirring slideshow verges into supernatural *Rebecca* territory as a horrified Kate shares the screen with the ghost of possibilities past. Tom Courtenay is her perfect complement as an emotionally lurid man, who may be shambling sadly through unresolved personal mysteries but who is still full of admiration for his wife. In the build-up to the party, scenes of shared tenderness become increasingly offset by scenes of quiet conflict. Haigh leaves it up to the viewer to decide which deposits from their shared bank of experiences will have the most weight, although the final shot evokes a pure shiver.

**SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN**



# Andrew Haigh

## LWLies receives some relationship advice from the writer/director of British drama, *45 Years*.

**LWLIES: 45 YEARS SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE DRAMA IS NEVER OVER BETWEEN COUPLES, LIKE YOU CAN GROW OLD TOGETHER AND RETIRE TO A BEAUTIFUL COTTAGE IN A REMOTE LOCATION, BUT PEACE AND HAPPINESS AREN'T REALLY A LONGTERM PLAN, EVEN IN A LOVING, LONGTERM RELATIONSHIP. WOULD YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THAT?** Haigh: Such a negative opinion! That is part of it but it's more like you can never truly know someone in a relationship. It's always really hard to truly know someone. Relationships kind of get forged in their beginning period. You grow as a person and you change as a person but you're not always honest with who you are as you're developing within that relationship. For these two people, at this time in their life, they've stopped questioning who they are as a relationship and who they are mutually. Suddenly this thing from the past makes them reflect on who they are together, what they are to each other and who they are as people. It throws everything into chaos.

**I REALLY LIKED THE ASPECT OF 45 YEARS THAT YOU PERCEIVED AS A NEGATIVE READING. IN SO MANY FILMS, THE HAPPY ENDING COMES WHEN PEOPLE GET TOGETHER. IT'S LIKE, 'OH, THEY'LL NEVER HAVE A PROBLEM AGAIN. THEY'RE FINE. THEY FOUND EACH OTHER.' I THINK YOU DO SOME GOOD MYTH-BUSTING.** It's true. Life – whether it's relationships or whatever – is an ongoing struggle. The only time it ends is when you die. I do think that it can be liberating. I suppose if I remember now I wanted people to watch *45 Years* and for the film to finish and for people to think, 'Okay! I can take control of my relationships. I can take control of my life. I can realise that I need to keep working on things, I need to keep thinking about things.' As long as we are constantly addressing how we feel in life and what we want from life, that's a good thing. It's a hard thing and it means that you will be in a constant, never-ending struggle but at the same time you need to do that, you need to struggle, you need to keep working at it, otherwise it's never going to get better.

**EVEN WITH RELATING TO PEOPLE, THERE'S THE PULL OF ROSE-TINTED GOGGLES AND THEN THERE'S THE PULL OF JUST LOOKING AT A PERSON AND REALISING THAT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO FIX YOU OR SOLVE ANYTHING BUT THEY'RE A GOOD PERSON AND YOU LOVE THEM.** And it's realising that nothing is ever going to be perfect. You have to make compromises. You're going to have dreams that are unfulfilled and – do you know what? – that's okay, that's just part of living and being with people. It's a difficult process for everybody. You're right. You watch

most mainstream films and it's like, 'Oh okay, I'll meet the love of my life, we'll have a few little complications and then we'll be great and it'll all be wonderful and fantastic.'

**AND WE'LL BE VERY WITTY IN PUBLIC.** And have amazing sex constantly and be amazing and not have the truth of a relationship, which is that they become relatively mundane. That is the truth of relationships, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Maybe it is for some people but for me it's great. You work out what works for you and that becomes the most important thing.

**MY REACTION TO THE FILM WAS KIND OF DARKER TODAY BECAUSE I JUST FIXATED ON YOUR FINAL SHOT BUT IT WAS THE SECOND TIME I'D SEEN THE FILM. THE FIRST TIME I CRIED WITH JOY. THERE'S A CLEARLY A LOT OF TENDERNESS IN 45 YEARS. ARE YOU HOPING THAT PEOPLE WILL COME AWAY THINKING, 'THAT'S A FILM ABOUT LOVE' OR ARE YOU HAPPY FOR PEOPLE TO BRING THEIR OWN SHIT TO IT?** It's really important to me that people do bring their own shit to it. The weird thing is that I feel the same way. When I would work on the film, when I was editing and stuff, I would sometimes watch it and feel very different at the end and it would usually be dependent on the type of mood that I was in. More than anything it's just about showing how hard it is to work out what you want in a relationship. It's hard to understand who you are within a relationship. I wanted it to be open-ended, to make you bring your own ideas to it, as you reach that end point 🍷



## Iris

Directed by **ALBERT MAYSLES**  
Released **31 JULY**

From his short-form portraits of Marlon Brando and Muhammad Ali, to his feature-length studies of the Rolling Stones, the extended Kennedy-Onassis clan and door-to-door bible hawkers, eccentricity and performance have been constant bed-fellows in the work of the late Albert Maysles. His penultimate film – a tender, primary-coloured portrait of the fashion world’s favourite nonagenarian iconoclast – is cut from the same cloth, a fitting swansong for one of cinema’s foremost celebrators of curve-swerving individualism.

“I don’t have rules because I’d always be breaking them,” could be a line pulled from any Maysles documentary. It’s spoken here by Iris Apfel, one of the world’s foremost collectors of couture jewellery and fashion. With her shock of white hair, over-sized glasses and vivid slash of the pinkiest lipstick, this 93-year-old force of nature glides through the intersections of New York’s fashion, design and art scenes like a one-woman mobile installation. Maysles’ deceptively straightforward technique layers moments like his protagonist layers accessories. “I like to improvise,” says Iris, and Maysles echoes the jazz-inspired approach of his subject, building themes and returning to them with little regard for ostentatious displays of technique.

Iris explicitly acknowledges an early influence on her lifelong need to accumulate from the owner of a department store who once told her, “You’ll never be pretty, but it doesn’t matter, you have style.” Maysles finds subtle grace notes that further serve to psychologise her obsession, yet there’s little sense of an unmasking, as her art and self prove so contagiously fused to the joy she finds in ‘play’. What emerges as the backbone to Iris’ story and Maysles’ film is the significant supporting character found in her sharp, century-celebrating husband Carl. The filmmaker may be capturing a lifetime’s virtuosic solo, but underneath it all is a 70-year-long love story, keeping the beat. **MATT THRIFT**

**ANTICIPATION.** *The penultimate film from the late, great Albert Maysles.*

4

**ENJOYMENT.** *A vivid portrait of one of fashion’s true iconoclasts.*

4

**IN RETROSPECT.** *A love letter to individualism, and the love that fuels it.*

4



## 52 Tuesdays

Directed by **SOPHIE HYDE**  
Starring **TILDA COBHAM-HERVEY,**  
**DEL HERBERT-JANE, MARIO SPÁTE**  
Released **7 AUGUST**

There’s nifty bait-and-switch storytelling at play in debut director Sophie Hyde’s *Boyhood*-style, time-lapse drama. What seems to be a queer issue film morphs into a rich thematic brew depicting how family, sexuality and time are all bound up in defining one another.

*52 Tuesdays* was filmed for one day a week over the course of a year and then condensed into a 110 minute film. The narrative progresses only on Tuesdays as this is the designated evening that peppy 16-year-old Billie (Tilda Cobham-Hervey) spends with her mother, Jane (Del Herbert-Jane). The two have stopped living together to give Jane the space to adjust to the process of gender reassignment. Now living with her less strict father, Billie takes the opportunity to run wild. A stand-out scene shows her spying on a couple fucking in the school cloakroom. When they ask her to join in, Cobham-Hervey’s ingenue eyes are wide, hypnotised at the crossroads between innocence and experience. Her exaggerated mannerisms distract from her character but the camera still loves her doe-eyed form.

Hyde’s opening tactic of harnessing the voyeuristic thrill of Jane’s physical transformation cedes ground to classical growing pains territory. On the early Tuesdays, the bouncing Billie functions as a narrator who rings in the changes. As the parent-child relationship become more distant, Hyde shows her full hand. Transgenderism is the topical Macguffin for a film about children growing away from parents, even as mirroring behaviour persists. Shifting independent values and the strain this puts on what was once a harmonious parent-child relationship is compelling. The clumsy device of streaming global news footage between each Tuesday hammers home the point that change is constant and the world won’t stop. In real life, Herbert-Jane is non gender-conforming and she anchors the film with her gravitas. **SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN**

**ANTICIPATION.** *Transgenderism is so hot right now.*

3

**ENJOYMENT.** *An unconventional family drama rather than an issue film.*

3

**IN RETROSPECT.** *Rough around the edges but sophisticated where it counts.*

3



## The Wolfpack

Directed by **CRYSTAL MOSELLE**  
 Starring **THE ANGULO FAMILY**  
 Released **21 AUGUST**

**F**amilies. Everyone thinks theirs is a little weird. But we sincerely doubt there are many that could rival the ostensible oddness of the Angulo tribe. That last word is particularly accurate in this instance, seeing as how the subject of Crystal Moselle's fascinating documentary is a group of six brothers (and one sister) who have been raised in isolation from the outside world – in a cosy apartment situated in New York City.

From that description you might expect *The Wolfpack* to resemble an anthropological exercise, a clinical study designed to stimulate the great nature versus nurture debate. Yet perhaps the most unusual thing about the Angulo brothers is how normal they appear. Far from being a dysfunctional, troublingly maladjusted bunch, Bhagavan, Govinda, Jagadisa, Krsna, Mukunda and Narayana are bright, affable and, most surprisingly, comfortable in front of the camera.

It's at this juncture Moselle opts to reveal her film's true hook. That this homeschooled hexad have been raised on a strict diet of movies, their childhood spent meticulously reenacting various pop culture touchstones (*Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* are notable favourites) using an impressive array of handmade props and costumes. What sets the Angulos apart is the fact that their worldview is strictly two-dimensional in so far as everything they know about being human has been gleaned from watching the kinds of films that offer a stylised version of reality.

Amid all the sibling-based swedding antics, the film strikes a more sombre note. Having only been allowed to venture beyond the confines of their Lower East Side sanctuary on a handful of supervised occasions, these kids have lived depressingly sequestered lives. So what about mum and dad? Surely their extreme cotton-wool approach to parenting demands intense scrutiny? Undeniably so, but Moselle shrewdly leaves it to the viewer to unpick the film's myriad ethical quandaries. **ADAM WOODWARD**

### ANTICIPATION.

*Always best to take Sundance praise with a pinch of salt.*

3

**ENJOYMENT.** *Astonishing stuff, and lots to discuss post-screening.*

4

**IN RETROSPECT.** *A profoundly compelling yet far-from-unimpeachable piece of doc making.*

3



## Touch of Evil

Directed by **ORSON WELLES**  
 Starring **CHARLTON HESTON, ORSON WELLES, JANET LEIGH**  
 Released **10 JULY**

**T**o paraphrase François Truffaut's observations on *Touch of Evil*, Orson Welles created a character in corpulent Hank Quinlan who is so unrepentantly revolting that we end up falling in love with him. He also created a character in Mike Vargas (Charlton Heston) – a dude who shoots so straight it hurts – that we end up despising him. It's a film which flips concepts of heroism and villainy on their respective heads, devious conduct is normalised in a world plagued by cruelty and injustice. Working on baseless hunches, sending people to the gallows with a certitude that comes nowhere near being beyond reasonable doubt, is how this crooked world turns. "He was some kind of a man... What does it matter what you say about people?" is the utterly devastating final line spoken by cigarillo-puffing, pianola-playing clairvoyant Tana (Marlene Dietrich), sealing this notion that people are too complex to be straight-jacketed as the products of their banal earthly actions. Welles came aboard this film by accident, rewrote it from scratch and then had the final cut taken from him. Even for the late '50s, when you had people like Samuel Fuller and Nicolas Ray making markedly weird movies, or at least weird riffs on normal movies, *Touch of Evil* takes things to the baroque next level. The giddy constellation of eccentric side players and slum-like locations coalesce to form a story that often comes across as contrived. But it's only by its tremendous, surreal climax that you realise that this is pure character study and not some wantonly outlandish noir-thriller in which everything ties up in a neat bow. It's a film which pits intuitive man against pragmatic man, and ends up by deducing that both lifestyles have their relative strengths and weaknesses. Like the bomb that's lobbed in the boot of the soft-top car in its opening scene, *Touch Of Evil* is a film where we can hear the faint sound of ticking in our heads, but don't realise what the problem is before it's far too late. **DAVID JENKINS**

### ANTICIPATION.

*Orson Welles' mangled masterwork is back in town.*

4

### ENJOYMENT.

*Madness has never looked this soulful.*

5

**IN RETROSPECT.** *"An hour ago, Rudy Linnekar had this town in his pocket. Now you could strain him through a sieve."*

5



# Marshland

Directed by

**ALBERTO RODRÍGUEZ**

Starring

**JAVIER GUTIÉRREZ,  
RAÚL ARÉVALO,  
ANTONIO DE LA TORRE**

Released

**7 AUGUST**

3

## ANTICIPATION.

*There's been far too few Spanish 'Southern noirs' in these parts.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Procedural and politics in Spain's deep south, works a grim treat.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Allegory washes up against mystery in this superb period piece.*

**M**arshland opens with spectacular high-angle aerials of the littoral spaces around the Guadalquivir River. Livestock are reduced to moving dots, birds fly across the screen between heaven and earth, and the colourful landscapes below, shot from a god's eye view, take on the appearance of the capillaries, cataracts and cortices of a living organism. This beautiful, mysterious imagery, drawn from the photography of Héctor Garrido, reveals a strange borderland where water is in constant, symbiotic negotiation with more solid ground.

It is an apt setting for Alberto Rodríguez's film, a 'Southern noir' that unfolds in the shifting political landscapes of a Spain struggling to emerge from the shadow of Franco. In the Andalusia of 1980, the wetlands themselves have become the contested territory of change, with paddyfield labourers striking for better pay and working conditions, and heroin dealers navigating the river system for the community's black economy. Against this backdrop, a pair of homicide detectives show up from out of town to investigate the disappearance of two teenaged sisters. If hard-living, moribund Juan (Javier Gutiérrez), with his shadowy reputation for petty corruption and worse, is very much a figure of the past, then the younger, more clean-cut Pedro (Raúl Arévalo) – an idealist and democrat who is also soon to be a father – definitely represents the future.

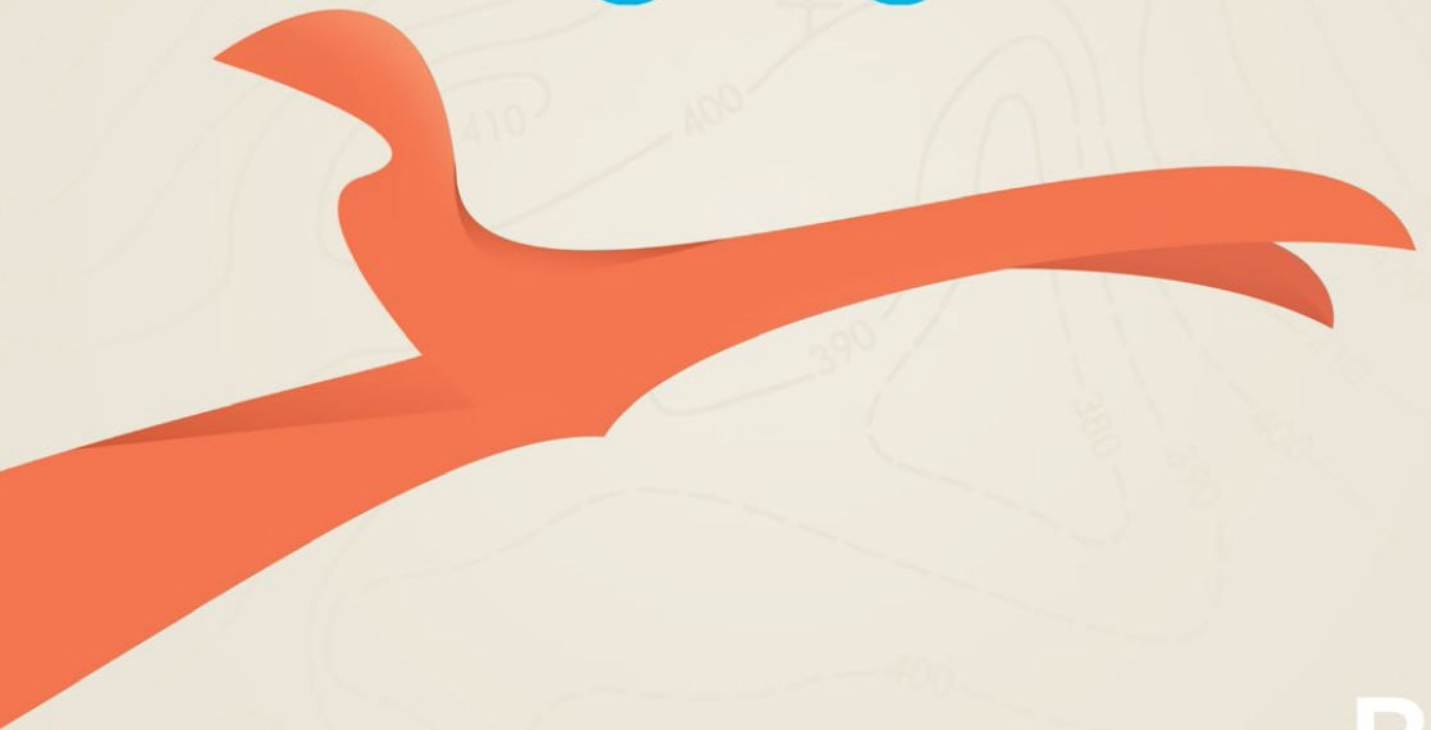
Yet when the girls' mutilated corpses turn up in the canal and evidence of serial murders emerges dating several years back, the two unlikely partners

discover, in working together, that they have more in common than either would like to admit – even as they find themselves in a place still haunted by the ghosts (and graffiti) of fascism, where youthful hopes for a better life are all too easily exploited and abused.

Not unlike Koldo Serra with 2006's *The Backwoods*, Jorge Sánchez-Cabezudo in *The Night of the Sunflowers* from the same year, Juan José Campanella with 2009's *The Secret in their Eyes*, or Juan Carlos Medina in 2012's *Painless*, here co-writer/director Rodríguez offers the generic thrills of investigative procedural as gripping cover under which to smuggle in all manner of historical reflection and state-of-the-nation commentary. For the most part the film's action is rooted in a particular time and place, with great attention paid to period detail (and inspired in part by the work of another photographer, Atín Aya) – but there is also an element of surrealism here that might best be characterised as 'Lynchian', be it the battered teen body found in the water, the presence of a supposed medium, the key scenes taking place in a hunting 'lodge', or even the birds (flamingoes, kingfishers, etc.) that keep distracting Juan (who himself eventually comes with his own bird-themed nickname). As all of this stranger imagery laps up against the shoreline, Rodríguez never lets us forget that the Sevillean plain, for all its grounded reality, has also become here a more fluid locus of the mind, as well as a staging area for these dramas of the Spanish subconscious.

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# The Wonders

Directed by  
**ALICE ROHRWACHER**  
Starring  
**ALBA ROHRWACHER,  
MARIA ALEXANDRA LUNGU,  
SAM LOUWYCK**  
Released  
**17 JULY**

3

## ANTICIPATION.

*Corpo Celeste* established director Alice Rohrwacher as a bold new voice.

3

## ENJOYMENT.

*A quirky coming-of-ager set to play a major part in shaping of magical realism.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Alice and Alba Rohrwacher look set to play a major part in shaping the future of Italian cinema.*

Proving once again why she's currently regarded as one of Italian cinema's most exciting prospects, Alice Rohrwacher follows up her impressive 2011 debut, *Corpo Celeste*, with this semi-autobiographical tale of a colourful family's struggle to keep its head above water against a changing tide.

We're in middle Italy, more specifically on a tumbledown farm owned and operated by gruff patriarch Wolfgang (Sam Louwyck) and his four young daughters. Beekeeping is their trade, the fiscal rewards of which are sweet but offer scant nourishment. Keeping the whole rabble in check are mother Angelica (Rohrwacher's elder sister, Alba, perhaps best known to UK audiences for her supporting turn in Luca Guadagnino's Milanese melodrama from 2009, *I Am Love*) and spiky live-in helper Coco (Sabine Timoteo). Theirs is a modest set up – the equipment the use to harvest the honey is simple and outdated – but they seem relatively content in their countrified ways. Wolfgang is strict yet fair, and his strong work ethic means there's always enough bread on the table to go round. But it's a question of "for how long?" when impending regulatory changes dictate that they modernise or risk being shut down.

The family effectively represents traditional Italian working values, which are being threatened by big business (personified here by invasively loud gunfire from passing hunters, met with fist-shaking wrath by Wolfgang) in the less progressive parts of the country. It's a sympathetic portrait, but Rohrwacher neither glorifies their peasant lifestyle nor condemns

the economic climate that is slowly squeezing them dry. Instead she focuses largely on the relationship between Wolfgang (grateful for everything he has but quietly desperate for a son) and eldest daughter Gelsomina (Maria Alexandra Lungu), dedicating leisured sequences to them tending their hives in a neighbouring crop farmer's parched fields.

The sumptuous cinematography and crisp Umbrian sun lends these scenes an almost dream-like quality, which is juxtaposed by the pressure-cooker setting of the family abode. It's here that the film really takes shape, as the adults bicker about how they're going to afford to replace their old-fashioned machinery, and the girls provide succour and distraction in equal measure as children do. The quickest path to salvation is revealed in the form of a television talent contest where a handsome cash prize is awarded to the most viewer-friendly agricultural family. Naturally, the show is humorously trashy and hosted by Monica Bellucci in dazzling fetish goddess regalia. But Wolfgang, out of sheer stubbornness, isn't interested, prompting Gelsomina to disobey her dear papa in an attempt to drag the family out of their dysfunctional mire single-handedly.

For a country with such a rich cinematic heritage, Italy's recent track record as far as championing emerging talent is concerned, especially of the female variety, is hardly what you might call exemplary. To that end, the continued rise of the Rohrwacher sisters comes as both a welcome tonic and the surest sign yet that the long-term future of Italian cinema is in good health. **ADAM WOODWARD**



# Alice & Alba Rohrwacher

One directs, the other acts. *LW*Lies meets the Italian sisters behind the charming bucolic fairytale, *The Wonders*.

**LWLIES: THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF TALK ABOUT THE PERSONAL OR AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NATURE OF *THE WONDERS*.** Alice: I'm very keen to make that distinction. Yes, it's very personal, but it's not autobiographical. The narrative isn't our story, but it's one we know very well. The world that the film inhabits is one we're very familiar with, but the events themselves are completely imagined. It's reductive – both for me and for the audience – to define it as autobiography.

**TELEVISION PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN *THE WONDERS*. WHAT WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP LIKE WITH TV WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP?** Alba: We had one, but we didn't get to see much. It was a bit of a mystery. Alice: It was a mystery! It's a bit like in *Corpo Celeste*, when you go to investigate a mystery, it often turns out to be pretty innocuous, pretty normal. Alba: Much like the Jesus figure in *Corpo Celeste*, the TV quickly becomes something tangible, but it starts off as a mirage, like an apparition.

**WHAT ABOUT CINEMA? DID YOU GET TO SEE MUCH ON THE BIG SCREEN AS KIDS?** Alice: Cinema wasn't really present, physically, for us growing up. There weren't many around, and those that were just showed blockbusters. Literature, art and music were much more available for us, but none of our friends had cameras, certainly not video cameras.

**SO WHEN DID YOUR FORMATIVE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCES HAPPEN?** Alice: It was different for both of us. I got into documentaries in a big way when I went to study in Turin, and I got to see a lot at the film festival there. I tried making some documentaries. It was a way of attempting to discover something about reality. Alba: I fell in love with theatre first, at drama school. Everything came out of that. Alice: We were cinema virgins when we found it. Alba: We were ingenues! Drama school captured my heart, which just grew bigger and bigger with my love for cinema and acting, so I decided to try for the cinema school in Rome as an actor. But my look was... Alice: ...they couldn't believe someone could look like this. Alba: It wasn't because I was strange, I just really knew nothing. I felt like an alien.

**SO WERE ANY THERE SPECIFIC INFLUENCES?** Alice: It's difficult to talk about, because at each point in your life there's a film or a book that connects with you or changes you in some way. Sometimes it's difficult to go back to those films again, later on. Alba: Because you don't recognise it, or yourself. Alice: It was documentary that gave me the courage and the passion to explore fiction filmmaking.

I began to feel that perhaps there might be more truth in telling a story than in making a documentary. But then, somebody who has always affected me, since I first saw his films at school, is Roberto Rossellini.

**ALBA, DID YOUR WAY OF WORKING CHANGE WHEN YOU WERE WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN? WAS THERE MUCH DIFFERENCE TO YOUR METHOD WITH THEM THAN WITH, SAY, ADAM DRIVER? [ALBA HAD JUST WON THE PRIZE FOR BEST ACTRESS AT VENICE, STARRING ALONGSIDE DRIVER IN *HUNGRY HEARTS*]** Alba: I hope there's no difference, the most important thing is to find a truth. With the children, it's very powerful, because you're naked in front of them. You can only follow the truth they're constantly discovering. There's a lot of waiting when you're shooting, so we were able to build a relationship within the script, but also outside it too. It's a delicate balance, between what is fake and what is real, so we all help each other to build up to something, then try to stay there. The example you gave though is very good, because Adam... Well, I prefer to work with children. With children, there's always risk, there are people looking at you who react truthfully every time, to every change you make. It makes me feel alive. An actor makes decisions, in how he's going to respond. Adam is the same as me though, he works the same, always fighting for the truth. Not my truth, not his truth, the truth of the moment. It was the same with Alice and the four young... Alice: ...monsters. Alba: The four monsters! We all just cared about the moment. About getting to the truth of it 🌟



# P'tit Quinquin

Directed by

**BRUNO DUMONT**

Starring

**ALANE DELHAYE,**

**LUCY CARON,**

**BERNARD PRUVOST**

Released

**10 JULY**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*The idea of Bruno Dumont making a comedy just sounds so deliciously improbable.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Human remains stuffed inside a cow in a bunker. Funny...*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*A nation's backward chauvinism wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma...*

Let's roll! The declaration of bungling, twitching Commandant Van der Weyden (Bernard Pruvost) of the National Police, as he and his partner Lieutenant Carpentier (Philippe Jore) investigate the grisly discovery of human remains inside a dead cow laid out in an old, barely accessible war bunker. Yet with ever more corpses emerging, the mobility implicit in Van der Weyden's catchphrase contrasts with Carpentier's habit of making seven-point turns or driving in circles. This undynamic duo, much like their enquiry, appears to be going nowhere – although the macabre case does uncover all manner of half-buried historical and cultural tensions in a rural community of Northern France.

As much as human parts do not naturally belong in a ruminant, writer, director and artful miserabilist Bruno Dumont, maker of such films as *L'Humanité* and *Camille Claudel 1915*, is not normally associated with comedy (or TV) – but then *P'tit Quinquin*, his four-part mini-series made for French television, is an odd hybrid by any generic measure, showing all at once the bestial within the human, the devil in the haystack and something nasty in the woodshed. With its keystone kops, oddball locals and gruesome grotesquery, *P'tit Quinquin* is funny alright – but also deeply unnerving.

It is hard not to think here of the small-town surrealism of *Twin Peaks* (which Dumont claims not to have seen), as country and sea-side settings become the locus for all manner of bizarrely mysterious goings-on, and a microcosm for a state whose present attitudes are rooted in past

strife. This is not the prettified France of Parisian postcards, but rather a mud-spattered milieu where historic wars have left a trail of memorials and munitions, where internecine feuds continue to be quietly waged, and where the National Front finds its tight-lipped majority.

Peripheral to the murder investigation, yet the central focus of the series and its title, is the pre-teen Quinquin (Alane Delhaye) – all at once little rascal, altar boy, tenderly innocent lover to girl-next-door Eve (Lucy Caron), and casual racist. Quinquin is both inheritor and embodiment of France's future, and his cleft lip, squashed nose and hearing aid are counterparts to Van der Weyden's facial ties and limp, or to the mental disability of Quinquin's Uncle Dany (Jason Cirot), whose spinning, circular ambles recall Carpentier's driving. They are signifiers of broader imperfection in the French idyll.

Presented in its unedited 200 minutes, this is big-screen binge-watching, and offers a meandering, ramshackle portrait of the state of a nation rather than the usual arc-and-resolution structure expected of a feature film. Yet the series' place in the cinema is fully justified by Guillaume Deffontaines' 'Scope lensing, which maintains a comically panoramic distance from all the pastoral perversity on display. The baroque body count is just a red herring, with France's insularity, chauvinism and bad blood the real devil here. It's a dark lesson in history which, released in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo massacre, seems all too prescient.

**ANTON BITEL**



# Manglehorn

Directed by  
**DAVID GORDON GREEN**

Starring  
**AL PACINO**  
**HOLLY HUNTER**  
**HARMONY KORINE**

Released  
**7 AUGUST**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*Really digging David Gordon Green's subtle groove these days.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*This film makes for very fine company. A movie to sit at the bar with and share a beer.*

3

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Its pleasures are low-key, for sure, but Green just packs the screen with interesting things.*

**D**irector David Gordon Green has come full circle. *Manglehorn*, his tenth feature, displays many of the rhapsodic qualities of his first feature, 2000's *George Washington*, in that both are predominantly interested in cultivating texture and a sense of place. Both films possess only the most meagre thread of what you might term a narrative, but Green has reached a point in his career where he sees that examining the interplay between people and landscapes is more cinematic than focusing on just the people or just the landscapes. And as with the majority of Green's films and TV works, the locales of the Southern states of America are depicted as utopian idylls where white people and black people cohabit with no hint of racial tension. It's only class divisions which create shitty days.

Angelo Manglehorn (Al Pacino) is an ageing, mildly decrepit and crotchety Texan locksmith who pines for his lost love – Clara. He mails her mawkish love letters written in a childish scrawl, gently begging for her to return to him, but to no avail. The film shows how he is able to locate the courage to move on with his life and accept his loss as a lesson for the future. The material feels jerry-rigged to allow Pacino plenty of wiggle-room within the role, and his staccato delivery, his spiky comportment, his 'hoo-hah!' bravado, his "thing," have rarely looked so adorably pitiful.

Manglehorn slinks around town with his back-combed hair and tiny eye-glasses, meets his ingrate son who works as a trader, takes his cat to the vet to have a key removed from her intestines, and effortlessly charms a friendly bank teller (Holly Hunter), but is thrown into a tailspin when she

starts to return his off-the-cuff come-hithers. He has a conversation with his pre-teen granddaughter about whether you can see the wind. And that's pretty much the tall and short of it. Harmony Korine turns up and is very funny as a brash ex-pupil from Manglehorn's formative years as a football coach, a tinpot entrepreneur with handsfree earphone and pork-pie hat who self-describes as The Tanman, on account of his seedy tanning salon/brothel. Icky though this may sound, all the people Manglehorn comes into contact with love him and want to help him, and though he's never less than affable towards them, he won't let them know what the problems is.

It's a small but exquisite film in which Green has taken no scene or shot for granted. He acknowledges happenstance, but never in a way which comes across as contrived or wacky. It's a lived in world where strange things happen, but strange things that people are used to. In the bank, a large man enters clutching a bouquet of flowers and starts to sing. Green never states whether he's insane, eccentric, or just being over-friendly. The bank staff neither smile or grimace, carrying on with their jobs. They just comprehend. *Manglehorn* is packed with such gorgeous grace-notes. And just as Green's previous feature, *Joe*, could be read as a tender extrapolation of Nicolas Cage's duel image of serious actor and action idol, *Manglehorn* is a film which says that perhaps Pacino is an veteran star who needs to consider severing ties from his '70s salad days and comprehend that he still has a whole lot to give to the world if he only just knew it. **DAVID JENKINS**



# Song of the Sea

Directed by  
**TOMM MOORE**

Starring  
**DAVID RAWLE**  
**BRENDAN GLEESON**  
**LUCY O'CONNELL**

Released  
**10 JULY**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*Oscar-nominated animation from the team behind the great The Secret of Kells.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*A major step up. Tomm Moore confirms himself as an animation heavyweight.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll want to purchase a seal onesie.*

Japan's Studio Ghibli currently sits at a strange creative impasse, the rumour being that no animator has been deemed worthy of carrying the torch first ignited by its two outgoing veterans, Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata. Hopefully, someone over there will soon catch sight of Tomm Moore's *Song of the Sea* and realise that the magical spirit of their work lives on, even if not through their own official channels. Saying that Moore's film is worthy of the Ghibi canon is high praise indeed, but it's praise this spellbinding film fully deserves. It's not so much the style or tone which denotes the overlap, it's the manner in which Moore enters into the mindset of a child and peruses the world through eyes which may not always comprehend life in the same way as more worldly adult contemporaries. It's also a gorgeous example of handmade artisan craft.

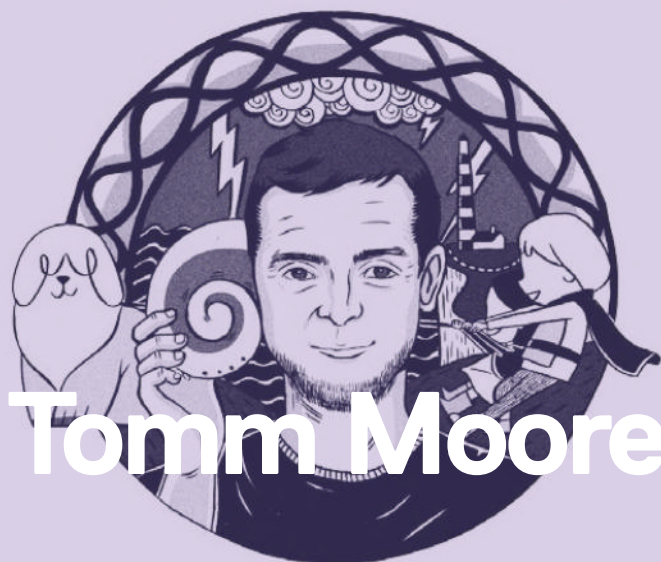
Though the film takes place in a world beset by bumptious faeries, friendly human-seal hybrids, oversized flying dogs and melancholic rock-faces, its concerns are wholly human, as represented through a cavalcade of fantastical and metaphorical imagery. One reason behind *Song of the Sea's* heady emotional potency, though, is not that Moore demonstrates a basic understanding of symbolism and subtext, but that he uses these methods to address a plethora of ideas and topics, not hammering down on the same narrow point which would allow you to say, 'Well this film was clearly about X or Y.' It's trickier than that. One minute it'll be talking about how adults and children grieve for the dead, and then quickly on to examining at the capricious nature of memory, then the pain that comes from suppressing ill feeling, and

on to the complex relationship dynamic between a brother and a sister. And this is all articulated in a way which is energetic and compelling, never preachy or insipid.

Ben (David Rawle) and Saoirse (Lucy O'Connell) are – along with their sad-sack, ineffectual father Conor (Brendan Gleeson) – the only inhabitants of a lighthouse which sits atop a cliff on a tiny island. Wee one Saoirse has been bestowed with ill-defined folkloric powers which have been passed on by her mother who was swept into the sea directly after giving birth. Ben resents her for this, but they bond when their granny spirits them away to the town to give dad a bit of time to gather his psychological marbles. The film is essentially about the pair's ramshackle journey back home and the influence that various eccentric parties have on their future. Their goal is essentially to risk life and limb to preserve Irish folk traditions and understand their cultural importance within everyday life. One cadre of urban faeries has taken the centre of a roundabout as their abode, finally seeing a chance to break free of their squalor when Saoirse wanders by. The film also offers a plaintive plea for open self-expression, arguing that it's counterproductive and bad for the health to bottle up negative emotion.

It's heart-on-sleeve stuff, teetering on the melodramatic, though it never pulls punches in terms of accepting that life involves us accepting and processing a heavy torrent of horror and depression. That all of this is articulated with such immense and playful visual splendour, levity, and not to mention arch humour, makes it truly a joy to behold.

**DAVID JENKINS**



## The Oscar-nominated director of *Song of the Sea* tells *LWLies* about what it means to make a hand-drawn feature film.

**LWLIES: IN THE NICEST WAY POSSIBLE, THIS FILM FEELS LIKE A BIG STEP UP FROM YOUR FIRST FILM, *THE SECRET OF KELLS*. Moore:** *The Secret of Kells* was, in a weird way, a 10-year training film. We were trying to get it made for so long that even when it was in production I was working on *Song of the Sea*. I just had all this stuff I knew I wanted to do better or do differently the next time. It really put the fire in me to take all the things I'd learned and apply them to this new one, and I'm so happy that, generally, people can see that. You're always afraid with what they call 'the difficult second album'.

**IT'S A BIGGER STATEMENT, BUT YOU'VE RETAINED A CERTAIN INTIMACY.** That was a challenge. During the development period, there was a lot of stuff floating around. There were people saying we should go CGI. The first draft of the script was very ambitious.

**WHO SAID YOU SHOULD GO CGI?** When we were pitching it, there were people saying we'd have more success if we made it CGI. It seems like an obvious step to open it up to a mainstream audience. It was always a challenge to keep it focused. We were always looking back to films like Miyazaki's *My Neighbour Totoro* and the 1992 Irish film *Into the West*. They were the touchstones for us. They kept us on track.

**IS CGI SEEN AS A MORE COMMERCIAL VIABLE MEDIUM WHEN IT COMES TO ANIMATION?** At the moment. People scratch their heads as to why that is. Part of the reason, at one point, was the novelty. It's super rendered, it looks familiar. Pixar has now become the standard where hand-drawn Disney used to be the standard for a quality animated feature film. So it's an extra hurdle to get across with audiences if you want to show them a hand-drawn film. From my point of view, unless you're also delivering the other things that people associate with CGI movies, like very mainstream plot, characterisation and comedy, I don't really see that point.

**DO YOU SEE *SONG OF THE SEA* AS AN INDIE MOVIE?** Yeah, I do. We stayed very indie, because when we talked to some of the bigger studios about it, they were very up front about the fact they'd have to change it a lot to make it work for them. We wanted it to be as broad as possible and for families everywhere to discover it, but we wanted to tell the story the way we wanted to tell it. I just wanted to retain that organic feel to the images.

**WHAT WERE THEY ASKING YOU TO CHANGE?** The comedy we were going for was nice and

gentle, and what they wanted was more jokes per minute. More gags. The bigger studios just said it didn't feel like a mainstream project.

**I SAW THIS MOVIE WITH A YOUNG AUDIENCE, AND THEY WERE REALLY ENGAGED WITH IT.** Oh, thank god. I thought you were going to say they were all on their iPhones watching *Despicable Me* or something. My wife teaches kids of around six to eight, and over the four years, she had four different classes, and we would always show them the work in progress story reels. We would get their feedback too. When we were over in LA for an awards show, I popped into a cinema and just watched it on a Wednesday afternoon playing to a half-full crowd. There were two young girls sitting behind us, and they were crying their eyes out by the end. So we introduced ourselves in the lobby, and they started crying again. Which was nice.

**IT'S DEFINITELY A WEEPIE.** I remember seeing *Up* at a festival in Zagreb in Croatia, and the audience had to keep lifting up their 3D glasses to wipe away the tears. That was really impressive.

**YOU MUST BE FRIENDLY WITH THE MAJOR PLAYERS AT ALL THE MAJOR ANIMATION HOUSES NOW?** I've had so much support from other animators. I remember after *The Secret of Kells* I got to see behind the curtain a little bit. A lot of the guys at places like DreamWorks would give me unofficial feedback on story reels and scripts as I do it. After *Kells*, I was toying with the idea of going out there and trying to work as in a story department. And they were all saying, 'No, don't do it, keep on with your own stuff!' That was really cool. Or maybe they just thought I'd be shit? 🍌



# Love & Mercy

*Directed by*  
**BILL POHLAD**  
*Starring*  
**PAUL DANO,**  
**JOHN CUSACK,**  
**PAUL GIAMATTI**  
*Released*  
**10 JULY**

3

## ANTICIPATION.

*Dano and Cusack and Banks and Giamatti, Oh my, this could be very interesting.*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Genuinely arresting, and a refreshingly original approach to pop biography.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*It has a lasting effect, largely down to committed performances from all concerned.*

**O**ren Moverman, the writer behind Todd Haynes' cubist Bob Dylan biopic from 2007, *I'm Not There*, scripts this screen biography of troubled Beach Boys leader/co-founder, Brian Wilson, with Bill Pohlad stepping out of his usual producer's seat and moving over to directing. This is a more straightforward tale than Haynes' film; it isn't a surreal extrapolation of Wilson's image, presented in the same teasing mythological manner. But *Love & Mercy* still employs techniques subtly to build an astounding sense of gravitas around the mysterious singer-songwriter.

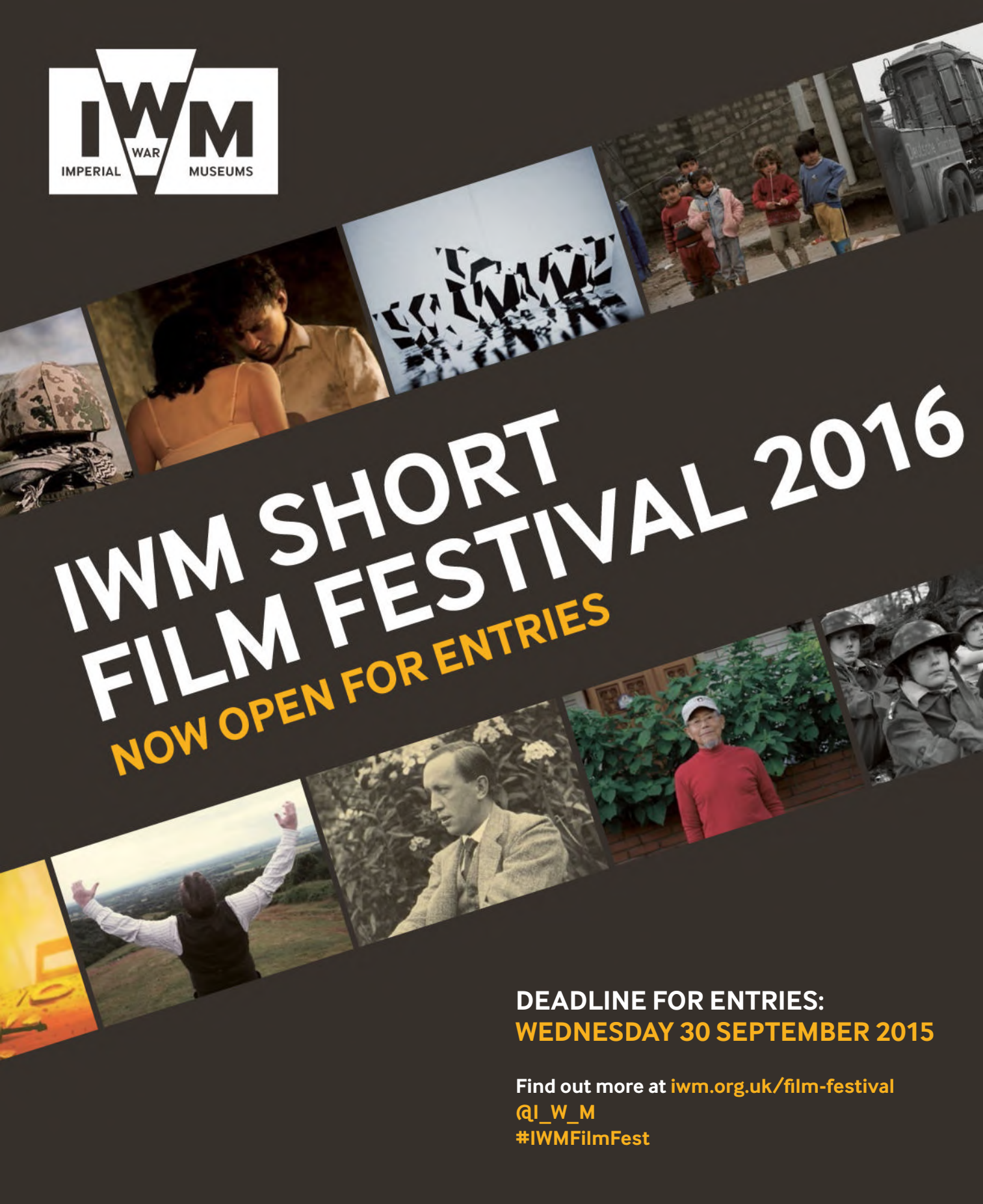
As the younger Wilson, Paul Dano strides through recording studio scenes with frenetic enthusiasm, a maestro at work, sometimes maddeningly obsessed, at others cripplingly indecisive. Later, beset by mental illness, dissociative and conversationally off-key, his slow drug addled decline becomes painful to watch. John Cusack, the older Wilson, is pharmaceutically beleaguered, contemplative and inscrutable. He's left behind the need for societal decorum, but remains refreshingly direct.

A narrative pendulum that swings ruthlessly between the '60s and '80s, and the intervening years remain a mystery of presumed steady deterioration. This is essentially an account surrounding the creation of one of the most renowned pop/rock albums of all time – 'Pet Sounds'. Melding the doo-wop and surf sound of their earlier releases while emulating Phil Spector's 'Wall of Sound' style and slivers of experimental '60s psychedelia, Pet Sounds was a critical darling but a commercial failure in the US upon its release in 1966.

Buckling under the accumulated pressure, Wilson gives way to an unwieldy and disparate web of tangled hallucinatory aural counterpoints. Jarring and unrelenting, his experiments with LSD and the stresses of an abusive childhood leave him open and vulnerable, easy prey for unscrupulous shrink Dr Eugene Landy (Paul Giamatti).

Perhaps as much about the psychological stranglehold of abusive relationships as the struggle of creative endeavour, *Love & Mercy* warns us to the dangers of perniciously motivated sycophants. The slow, insidious co-opting of fragile people by a series of normalising misdeeds is something we might all do well to pay heed to. Pharmaceutically transformed into a state of malleable placidity by the finance siphoning Landy, Cusack recounts, with dull onomatopoeic thuds, the beatings he received from his father, tragically leaving him all but deaf in one ear. In later years, Landy looms large, holding power of attorney over Wilson, entrapping him in an hermetically sealed horror, his every movement monitored, until Cusack attempts freedom, passing a note to Cadillac saleswomen Melinda Ledbetter (Elizabeth Banks) that simply reads: "Lonely, Afraid, Frightened".

*Love & Mercy* doesn't pluck at the heartstrings, but Wilson's story is at times terrifying, and the system of abuse he experienced is chilling. Instead, each musical element, each chord, each sound is crisply produced and played in unison to form the song of his life. It's bittersweet and melancholic, always captivating, holding the irrefutable truth of a pop lyric. Melinda emerges through the haze of bells and whistles, a bassline note of hope ringing as a constant. **CORMAC O'BRIEN**



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# Amy

*Directed by*  
**ASIF KAPADIA**

*Starring*  
**AMY WINEHOUSE, MITCH WINEHOUSE, BLAKE FIELDER-CIVIL**

*Released*  
**3 JULY**

4

## ANTICIPATION.

*Asif Kapadia applying his post-Senna rep to a magnetic lost talent.*

3

## ENJOYMENT.

*It's undeniable that this is meticulously researched and artfully put together.*

2

## IN RETROSPECT.

*Not sure whether the research goes deep enough or the art serves the truth.*

**A**my Winehouse died an unnatural death aged 27 and her image is shrouded in a mythological mist. To call a film simply by her first name suggests a focus on her truest outline. No more romanticised tragedy, no more exaggerated sorrow, no more fixation on sex and drugs and jazz and soul. For heightened dramatisation, you need only have read the newspapers during the last five years of her life. Fans of her music are primed for an antidote.

Disappointingly, puffed-up melodrama is something that Asif Kapadia opts to expand on with his engrossing but somewhat pointless exercise in retracing the highlights and lowlights of a public figure already bogged down in hyperbolic projections. As with the director's wildly successful *Senna* from 2010, *Amy* benefits from the production's wealth of access. Present is everything from inside source stuff – voicemail messages and handwritten lyrics – to performances, video footage and tabloid photos. Basically, all the fat sucked from the body of a woman who came to know no privacy.

The documentary begins with home video footage of Amy aged 14, mucking around with mates on the staircase of a north London house. Her voice is as full as her face. Her face is different to the one the world came to know. Bulimia was a compulsion as damaging to her as heroin, crack and alcohol addictions. In unearthing and pursuing this fact of her life, Kapadia's documentary does its best work. The rest feels like opportunistic storytelling. The team had access to oceans of raw data, a result of "two-and-a-half years of forensic research," according to producer, James Gay-Rees. In less steady hands this material would

likely be a slurry of nonsense. Instead it is buoyed by sharp focus and churning momentum. But what exactly was being forensically researched? Not Amy's interior life. The film delights in writing out the most ominous of her lyrics in flowery subtitles, but is only interested in her troubles insofar as they provide connective tissue to the next dastardly event or person.

The film takes a dim view of the paparazzi, who staked her day and night. Father, Mitch, presented as something of a bumbling oaf, is shown bringing a camera crew to her private St Lucia bolthole during a period of convalescence to film an opportunistic Channel 4 reality show. The message: behold the buzzards that surrounded this poor woman. And yet it uses the material served by these forces to inform a sophisticated retelling of the same old irresistible dramatic beats. Rather than trying to tunnel inward, past music industry exploitation, family negligence, drug addiction and romantic trauma, the doc bounces off these ghoulish pivots. The portrayal of Winehouse herself is almost the negative space in between the forces around her: a victim that holds their imprints rather than anyone deeper and more autonomous.

Kapadia has his own narrative agenda and it is not determined by his subject's emotional landscape. The gap between gawker and gawked at closes in when Amy sings, when her wicked humour and sincere passion is captured in words, in performances or in interactions with her heroes. If only this film hadn't been so desperate to shoe-horn in all the drama and had examined a more esoteric slice of her life, we might have come away with a more intimate portrait that merited such a familiar title. **SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN**



# The Salt of the Earth

Directed by

**WIM WENDERS, JULIANO RIBEIRO SALGADO**

Starring

**SEBASTIÃO SALGADO, JULIANO RIBEIRO SALGADO, WIM WENDERS**

Released

**17 JULY**

**3**

## ANTICIPATION.

*A documentary on such an accomplished visual artist should be ample material.*

**3**

## ENJOYMENT.

*A lifeless opening section can't overshadow the majesty of its subject's perspective.*

**4**

## IN RETROSPECT.

*The standout images should stay with viewers for the foreseeable future.*

**T**he *Salt of the Earth* begins with two voiceovers. The first is from film's co-director, Wim Wenders, pondering the true definition and role of a photographer by tracing the semantic origins of those two halves, "photo" and "grapher". The second is from the film's subject, Sebastião Salgado, and it recalls his experience documenting an excavation of Brazil's massive gold mine, Serra Pelada. One is set to a screen that's either pitch-black or marked only by abstract light schemes, the other is accompanied by photos that stun in their composition, contrast, content, and scale. One reaches for grand things, but mostly evinces delusions of grandeur, the other speaks in terms that would only be loaded if they weren't applied to objects of such immense power. The smartest thing Wenders can do is allow Salgado's words and images to do most of the talking.

The tension in this dichotomy provides a concise encapsulation of this new documentary. Although none of its few players could be considered extraneous — even those lesser-seen, such as co-director and the subject's son, Juliano Ribeiro Salgado, help a bit in contextualising the material — this is Sebastião's film through and through. It's natural that it would only thrive when he is placed in control. After all, Salgado has travelled to the furthest reaches of the world to capture both the unspeakable (genocide, poverty, governmental neglect) and the breathtaking (lakes, mountains, and wildlife in as "pure" a form as any photo has ever captured them). If anyone were to apply words to these images, he's our most viable candidate.

Or so it seems when the material feels so distant and lifeless as seen through Wenders' eyes. *Salt's* first section takes an outsider's perspective, investigating the biographical aspects of Salgado's life in rather standard documentary form — stock footage, director's voiceover, photos of, not by, the man, and the occasional talking-head insert. It never reveals who (or, more, abstractly, why) he is. Half-an-hour in, after Juliano Ribeiro steps in and looks at his father's careful process on a shooting trip, does it start to be clear why anyone would want to make a film about him in the first place.

Regardless of whether the blame should be hoisted upon blasé formalism or limited personal perspective, *The Salt of the Earth* reaches a point of transcendence when it dispenses with other voices entirely and centres on Sebastião. While the remainder could've been entirely silent, placing only images front and centre — there's has been a noted clamour to purchase the book of his work after seeing it here — his provided commentary is alternately illuminating and devastating, and as such a vital ingredient of the film as a whole. The film's emotional apotheosis is couched directly in a brutal reaction to one particular shot: "We are terrible animals." Wisely, Wenders shows that there can be light at the end of a seemingly endless tunnel. Salgado's vision of the natural world, a project called 'Genesis' which comprises much of *Salt's* second half, should leave even the most cynical of souls open to the possibilities of life. The same becomes true of this often remarkable film.

**NICK NEWMAN**



# The Diary of a Teenage Girl

Directed by

**MARIELLE HELLER**

Starring

**BEL POWLEY,  
ALEXANDER SKARSGÅRD,  
KRISTEN WIIG**

Released

**7 AUGUST**

2

## ANTICIPATION.

*A 2015 Sundance sensation, written and directed by an actor. Uh-oh, Spaghetti-Os!*

4

## ENJOYMENT.

*Quite delightful, a film which hums with a rare honesty and empathy.*

4

## IN RETROSPECT.

*You watch it thinking, this is probably going to be a lot of people's favourite movie.*

**T**his boisterous teen sex movie by Marielle Heller is a paragon of enlightenment and poise.

It talks about copulation – or, to adopt the parlance of the film, “fucking,” or actually even more apt, “fuckin’” – and human desire in frank but never alarmist terms, accepting young people as sexually liberated and thoughtful beings who are able to make sage decisions regarding those with whom they decide to share a bed (or a back-seat). It doesn’t, however, fall into the trap of making its teenagers come across as disproportionately mature as a way to comment on the juvenile sexual hang-ups of the surrounding adult characters. The beauty of this film is the way it strikes an honest balance between the two.

It’s been adapted from Phoebe Gloeckner’s 2002 graphic novel of the same name, which goes some way to explaining its satisfying loose-leaf structure. The title refers to Minnie, played with vim, vigour and an incredible throaty, nasal laugh by British actress Bel Powley, who expertly cuts through the charisma and faux bravado with small but important reminders that she really is just a kid. The story is set in ’70s San Francisco, a time where morals seemed to be at their freewheeling loosest, but the joke is that the film is clearly intended as a reflection of contemporary times.

We open on hearing an anecdote detailing Minnie’s first ever sexual encounter, which happened to be with her mother’s layabout jock boyfriend (Alexander Skarsgård). She intones her experiences, her experiments, her fetishes and her feelings into a microphone, then stashes the tapes under her bed. That she’s leaving hard evidence for someone to

find is anathema to her cause: she wants to become an artist and realises that success only comes to those willing talk candidly about their life and their emotions. She knows there has to be a physical way for others to experience these expressions.

It’s an episodic canter through one girl’s long and winding sexual awakening which never turns its characters into maudlin hate figures or deals in trashy stereotypes. While Minnie always seems to hone in on the awkward lay, the floppy-fringed skater who pines for her from the sidelines never gets so much as a look in – there’s no settling for the cutesy dipshit for *this* girl. Heller is also willing to drag Minnie across some surprisingly combustible terrain, showing how liberation can open doors to what some might view as more unseemly activities. This can range from questioning the ethics of an inter generational relationship, to looking at the line between prostitution and erotic monkeyshines for cash. And yet, Heller doesn’t ever paint that darker side of sex as such, remaining laudably open minded about its social function and those who, say, chose it as a profession rather than a leisure pursuit.

It really is hard to think of another movie quite like this, one so naturally harmonised with the rugged topography of teenage sexuality but that refuses to set its stall as Sex Ed 101. Aside from that, it’s just a complete piece of filmmaking – no scene feels rushed or extraneous, with unobtrusive animated inserts used to visualise Minnie’s in-the-moment feelings. Everyone is thoroughly on message here, though Powley is the barnstorming central jewel in this gorgeous makeshift tiara of a movie. **DAVID JENKINS**



# Marielle Heller

## *LWLies* meets the director of the outstanding teen sex opus, *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*.

**LWLIES: THERE'S AN INTERVIEW WHERE YOU SAID THAT THIS MOVIE TOOK AROUND SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE. WAS THE ORIGINAL MOVIE IN YOUR HEAD THE SAME AS THE ONE YOU EVENTUALLY MADE?** Heller: I think the completed version is better than the one I originally had in my head. The actors brought so much to the table. I feel like we got it to a place that I could never have dreamed of. They say that when you watch your first rough assembly that it's going to be the worst moment of your life. It's the worst your movie will ever look. For me, it was tough to watch as it wasn't the right takes and there were all these problems, but I also recognised it. 'Yep, that's my movie, it's in there.' I cried. I thought, we did it. We actually have a movie.

**YOU HAD A VERY INSTANT AND INTENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH PHOEBE GLOECKNER GRAPHIC NOVEL UPON WHICH THE FILM IS BASED. IS THIS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO YOU OFTEN?** It has never happened before. It was this weird, almost magical thing. I felt so

compelled that the minute I finished it I called up the publisher and I just started ranting about how much I wanted to adapt it. It was just really strange, to feel this about another person's work. I just had to say yes to this urge that was pulling me along. It didn't feel like me. And it got confusing when people started to say no to me. When Phoebe's agent said no, I didn't know what to do. So I stalked her, brought cookies to her office and convinced her to have lunch with me.

**ONCE YOU HAD FINALLY GIVEN ALL THESE COOKIES AWAY, HOW WAS PHOEBE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS?** She was incredibly generous with me. I went to her house and stayed with her and her kids. I looked through all her old drawings, diaries and letters. What's so incredible about her is that as she's such a committed artist, she gave me a huge amount of freedom. She said, 'I took real diaries and real life experiences and changed them, took artistic liberties with them and turned them into this one piece of art, and you need to do the same thing mister.'

**THERE'S THIS IDEA IN THE FILM THAT TO BE AN ARTIST YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT YOUR PRIVATE FEELINGS.** I think it's a vulnerable thing to produce art. This wasn't my exact story of being a teenager, but there's so much of my own life that I did put into the film. Many times during the process of writing, I felt really scared because I felt I was making something too personal. Yet whenever I would get that feeling, I would think, 'Yes, I'm on the right path.' If I'm feeling like I'm experiencing shame or embarrassment about something I've written, then I've probably pushed myself in a good way.

**DO YOU RECALL YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH BEL?** Our first meeting was over Skype. She lives in London and she submitted an audition tape. She used her American accent, and I didn't realise she was British. And then at the end of the tape, she put a little personal message to me, and went into her normal accent and I was totally blown away. And it was such a personal message about how much the script meant to her, I ended up watching it over and over.

**THIS IS A FILM WHICH CONTAINS NUMEROUS SEX SCENES. AS A FIRST-TIME DIRECTOR, HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THOSE SCENES?** I did sort of do a practice version when I was at the Sundance Labs, which was really helpful for directing a scene with nudity. When I was shooting that scene and I had to ask my young actress to be in the bathtub and be topless, I ended up taking my own shirt off while we filmed out of solidarity. That made her feel much better. I didn't have to end up doing that with Bel Powley, but at the time I was thinking about how I would direct somebody and make them feel comfortably. Truthfully, though, Alexander Skarsgård was incredible in helping both Bel and I navigate the shooting of sex scenes. Being on *True Blood* he had done them so many times, his attitude was that it was no big deal and it's no different to shooting any other scene. And so, we treated them just like any other scene. We blocked them, we talked really specifically about where people's heads would go, what their emotional intentions were, how they would move. We'd shoot them as if they were eating breakfast. We filmed all of our sex scenes in the first week, so we really had to dive in and figure that out fast 🌸



## Maggie

Directed by **HENRY HOBSON**  
 Starring **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER,**  
**ABIGAIL BRESLIN, JOELY RICHARDSON**  
 Released **24 JULY**

Since 2012's *The Expendables* sequel Arnold Schwarzenegger has – for better or worse – stuck to making the kinds of macho popcorn movies that require him to mix it with combative drug cartels and cutthroat mercenaries. *Maggie*, then, marks his first proper dramatic role since, well, ever. He plays a taciturn Midwest farmer named Wade Vogel whose eponymous daughter from a previous marriage (Abigail Breslin) is slowly turning into a zombie. Wade's new wife Caroline (Joely Richardson) is understandably less than impressed when he decides to rescue Maggie from quarantine, thereby putting the entire household – including their two young children – at risk. But, as anyone who's familiar with Arnie's oeuvre will attest to, sometimes poppa's gotta do what a poppa's gotta do.

If you're already buoyed by the prospect of Arnie showing off his serious acting chops, it is with a heavy heart that we report that *Maggie* is a total bust. Imagine if midway through filming *Interstellar*, Christopher Nolan suddenly lost interest in space/time travel and decided to reshoot the entire movie around the scene in which Matthew McConaughey's Cooper bids a teary adieu to his daughter. No action, no excitement, just two-and-a-half grinding hours of cloying *Sophie's Choice*-style decision making followed by a long, solemn embrace between a father and his child.

*Maggie* may be an inexact approximation of the hypothetical scenario presented above, but in unanchoring itself from the genre to which it ostensibly subscribes, director Henry Hobson leaves us with a drab family melodrama in which the zombie apocalypse backdrop is purely incidental. If it sounds like we're bagging on *Maggie* on the grounds that it's not the film we expected to see, it's worth noting that Hobson spends the entire time desperately trying to convince us that this is anything other than a horror movie, despite the fact that it's quite clearly a horror movie.

ADAM WOODWARD

### ANTICIPATION.

Arnie! Zombies! Sounds superfun.

3

### ENJOYMENT.

It isn't.

2

### IN RETROSPECT.

A missed opportunity.

2



## The Legend of Barney Thomson

Directed by **ROBERT CARLYLE**  
 Starring **ROBERT CARLYLE, EMMA THOMPSON,**  
**RAY WINSTONE**  
 Released **24 JULY**

It's interesting to ponder whether actors realise when they're staring in bad movies. Here is a case of an actor (Robert Carlyle) shifting to the director's chair and perhaps not realising that he's made a quite terrible film. Okay, there are some basic technical passes to be allowed in *The Legend of Barney Thomson*, and there's one or two appealingly off-kilter performances (cf Emma Thompson with OAP prosthetics and funny accent, aka "doing a Tilda"). But for the most part, this is a wretched film that's overloaded with casual hatred passed off as ironic cynicism. It hates the young. It hates the old. It hates the poor. It hates women. It hates outsiders. It hates authority figures. It hates the police. It hates small businesses. It hates local heritage. It hates Glasgow. It hates people. But most of all, this film is the enemy of basic coherence. It begins on a pratfall, when snivelling dullard Barney (Carlyle) accidentally murders his boss in a situation so improbable that you're waiting for it to be revealed as a drunken dream sequence. Barney's decision to then dispose of the corpse and not fess up to the crime (of which he is clearly innocent) helps to toss out any shred of credibility and empathy, and the movie dances on the spot for another 75 or-so minutes pretending to be a provincial riff on *Sweeney Todd* until... it ends. It's a very '90s film, edgy in a way that recalls the slew of Brit flicks which emerged trying to be the next *Trainspotting* or the new *Full Monty*. There's a basic contempt for the audience in the way it presents characters who drift through life making idiotic decisions that have no basis in reality. It's very tough to describe what this film is and to whom it might appeal. Like the character of Barney, there's little clue as to whether he's the hero, the villain or just a regular Joe with a silly haircut who stumbled across testing times. One thing's for certain, we're never once made to care enough to want to figure it all out. DAVID JENKINS

### ANTICIPATION.

Robert Carlyle is one of the good guys.

3

### ENJOYMENT.

Some fun performances, but that's about it.

2

### IN RETROSPECT.

Awful, anachronistic material delivered with a total paucity of charm.

1



## Gemma Boverly

Directed by **ANNE FONTAINE**  
 Starring **GEMMA ARTERTON, FABRICE LUCHINI,**  
**JASON FLEMYNG**  
 Released **14 AUGUST**

In a postcard-pretty Normandy village captured with a lens cannily in thrall to *that* breezily quaint French lifestyle, an amusing literary twist is being spun. Fabrice Luchini plays a role that is the romantic flip-side to his cynically-driven English professor in François Ozon's *In The House*. Therein, he encouraged a pupil to embed with a family in order to write about their personal life. In *Gemma Boverly*, his Martin Joubert is a Parisian-teacher-turned-provincial-baker who becomes obsessed with a married Englishwoman because she has (almost) the same name as Gustave Flaubert's unhappy heroine.

Gemma Arterton plays Gemma Boverly who has upped sticks from London with her husband Charles (Jason Flemyng) and absently befriends her besotted neighbour. "In one second that meaningless little wave signalled the end of 10 years of sexual tranquillity," goes Luchini's narration in that comically overwrought but touching way the French actor has perfected over the years. Arterton is shot by director Anne Fontaine via Martin's hypnotised gaze. The sun bounces off floaty dresses that cling to her body. Arterton gives a very grounded performance that is the antithesis to the airy-fairy tortured romantic heroine that Martin is so desperate to cast her as. In the gap between reality and his wild fantasies lies the comedy.

Absurd comedy is ratcheted up a level when Gemma begins following a vaguely similar arc to her literary forebear. The indecently golden Niels Schneider slinks onto the scene as the castle-inhabiting, aristocratically-named, Hervé de Bressigny. This is all the evidence that Martin needs to fully believe that fiction is coming to life. His acerbic wife makes digs aplenty but only the audience can hear her. Fontaine is ruthless in the application of the philosophy that when a man sucks on a literary love heart, nothing short of a tragedy will choke it loose. **SOPHIE MONKS KAUFMAN**

**ANTICIPATION.** *Anne Fontaine has made many films to minimal impact.*

2

**ENJOYMENT.** *A sly, smart, funny romp that sends up story-lovers who look at people and see characters.*

3

**IN RETROSPECT.**  
*Fontaine has raised her own bar.*

4



## Cub

Directed by **JONAS GOVAERTS**  
 Starring **MAURICE LUIJTEN, EVELIEN BOSMANS,**  
**TITUS DE VOOGDT**  
 Released **31 JULY**

Deploying a pair of hackneyed genre tropes for the opening shots of your movie is a bold move for a debut filmmaker. A bloodied girl running through a forest and a kid cycling through sun-kissed suburbia may serve as an economic statement of intent – Boy's Own adventure meets summer camp slasher – but we've heard these records too many times not to notice if Jonas Govaerts' remix fails to match the beats.

Closer in acknowledgement to the child's-eye horrors of Guillermo del Toro (not least in its 'creature' design) than the nostalgia-trip of *Super 8* or the full-bloodied ordeals of fellow Belgian Fabrice du Welz, Govaerts hides his influences in plain sight. With its Carpenter synths, a cop called Franju and snarky put-down of *Scream*, *Cub* sets its own bar pretty high. Clocking-in at a svelte 84 minutes, Govaerts doesn't bulldoze through the set-up, dedicating the best part of an hour to laying the narrative breadcrumbs we expect to mark a trail to the finale. Sadly, too often things lead to a dead end.

Unsure where to go with its pint-sized antagonist, Kai – a masked, feral child terrorising the young scouts on a camping trip – *Cub* throws in a booby-trap obsessed lunk late in the game, beating a path for the generic. Which we would be fine if we had even the vaguest sense of who these people were, or how they'd come to build such elaborate woodland death traps. They don't look like *Badlands* fans.

It's a problem that extends to our ostensible hero, 12 year old misfit, Sam. A throwaway mention of behavioural problems simply isn't enough for the nihilistic volte face of the ending to ring true, serving only to undercut our sympathies. Still, it's a smart move to coax *Bullhead* lenser Nicolas Karakatsanis on board, as *Cub* certainly looks the business. If Govaerts can tie up his narrative threads at script stage next time, a second collaboration might just be worth a look. **MATT THIRFT**

**ANTICIPATION.** *The Goonies meets Guillermo del Toro in kids-eye Belgian horror.*

3

**ENJOYMENT.** *Looks sharp, but early promise devolves into incoherence.*

2

**IN RETROSPECT.**  
*Not much adventure. Not much horror.*

2



## Too Much Johnson

Directed by <b>ORSON WELLES</b>	<b>1938</b>
Starring <b>JOSEPH COTTON, VIRGINIA NICOLSON, EDGAR BARRIER</b>	<b>OUT NOW</b>
	<i>Blu-ray</i>

It's up for debate as to whether we can now discount describing *Citizen Kane* as a debut feature, as there's something about Orson Welles' *Too Much Johnson* – made three years prior to *Kane* but thought to be lost until a print was discovered in a Pordenone warehouse in 2008 – that almost repels you from calling it proper movie. It's more of a visual work-out, Welles sparring with the idea of cinema rather than stepping up for a title fight. It stars a man who would become one of Welles' regular collaborators, Joseph Cotton, as a dandy caught frolicking with another man's wife who is subsequently chased around town for the best part of an hour. The film was originally intended to work as an ambient backdrop for a theatre production, and as such there's no dialogue or, to be honest, characters to speak of. But the film works as a celebration of movement and inertia, a daredevil urban ballet in the Harold Lloyd vein in which our hero dangles from rooftops and awnings while trying to escape his captor, a man of almost T-1000-esque doggedness. So yes, the form is far more interesting than the content, and Welles has experimental fun replaying short sequences, sometimes two or three times over, as well as using his edit tools as a way connect the world together in a way which transcends rational geography. It's like he's deconstructing cinema before he's even attempted to construct it, which fits with his pioneering artistic temperament. The stop-start editing actually recalls that of his final movie, *F for Fake*. Much of the film was shot in the Bronx district in New York, and you do get the sense that the extras going about their daily business are actually real people wondering what the hell these merry pranksters are doing. The film is released on Blu-ray with no accompanying extras. **DAVID JENKINS**



## Story of My Death

Directed by <b>ALBERT SERRA</b>	<b>2013</b>
Starring <b>VICENÇ ALTAIÓ, LLUÍS SERRAT, ELISEU HUERTAS</b>	<b>OUT NOW</b>
	<i>DVD</i>

Leave the weighty shackles of rational thought at the door when entering the playfully phantasmagoric world of Albert Serra's sublime *Story of My Death*, a movie which sends an ageing Casanova for a wander in the countryside where he bumps into Dracula, himself just loitering in the bushes. Serra's third feature picked up the Golden Leopard at the 2013 Locarno Film Festival and, during its subsequent meandering tour of world film festivals, managed to court lovers and loathers alike. The lovers affixed themselves to the lived-in, freewheeling majesty of a film just happy to consistently tantalise and tickle, while always retaining a loosely-defined sense of existential purpose. The loathers call it out as a random collage of scenes which its director has tacked together in the blind hope that obscurist profundity will naturally prevail.

That it can provoke such contrasting reactions instantly makes it worthwhile, a journey that you simply need to take to know. Yet, there's too much beauty and palpable devotion towards reshaping basic cinematic grammar for this to all be chalked up as a happy accident. The film was shot on digital but projected on film during its numerous festival berths, and the effect was jaw-dropping. This SecondRun DVD emulates the clash of modern and antiquated technologies in its gorgeous transfer, while also bundling in the short film, *Cuba Libre*, a night club-based howl of musical emotion which is dedicated to the late Günther Kaufmann, one of RW Fassbinder's stock company. This 18-minute short work just watches as a man sings his heart out on a mini stage, his voice oscillating between piercing whine and melodious trill, somewhere between Nick Cave and a liquored-up transient. **DAVID JENKINS**



## The Fisher King

Directed by <b>TERRY GILLIAM</b>	<b>1991</b>
Starring <b>JEFF BRIDGES, ROBIN WILLIAMS, ADAM BRYANT,</b>	<b>OUT NOW</b>
	<i>Blu-ray &amp; DVD</i>

**T**erry Gilliam has always excelled at conveying two things: madness and compassion. Therefore, it's hardly a surprise that his muse led him towards a story about grief, any sincere depiction of which invites the former and requires the latter. The trouble with *The Fisher King*, which is both invaluable and interminable in equal measure, is that it ultimately uses grief as little more than a conduit for Gilliam to play with yet another protagonist who is so consumed by tragic visions that they disengage from the real world and chase at the windmills of their own demons. So much attention is paid to the Don Quixote movie that Gilliam is perpetually struggling to make, people take for granted the half-dozen that he already has.

Jeff Bridges plays Jack Lucas, a merciless Manhattan shock jock modelled after Howard Stern. At the end of one particularly vitriolic broadcast, Jack rejects a cry for help from one of his regular callers, who then goes on to shoot up a crowded restaurant later that evening. Three years later, Jack has forfeited his penthouse for an apartment above the low-rent video store he runs with his girlfriend (Mercedes Ruehl). One suicidal evening, Jack is saved from a beating by Parry (Robin Williams), a deluded homeless man who thinks of himself as an Arthurian knight on a quest for the Holy Grail. *The Fisher King* is much like life after the loss of a loved one: difficult, but worth it for the precious moments of ineffable splendour. It's worth it to hear how Jeff Bridges pronounces the word "human" like it begins with a "y," and it's worth it to watch Robin Williams condense an entire solar system of behaviour into a single performance, and it's worth it to see the nightmare of human traffic that is Grand Central Station be transformed into a sublime cosmic waltz that will forever change the way you see it. **DAVID EHRLICH**



## My Beautiful Laundrette

Directed by <b>STEPHEN FREARS</b>	<b>1985</b>
Starring <b>GORDON WARNECKE, ROSHAN SETH, DANIEL DAY-LEWIS</b>	<i>Released 21 JULY</i>
	<i>Blu-ray &amp; DVD</i>

**A** knowing immigrant story, a tender queer portrait of love rekindled in a hostile environment, and a crash course in Thatcherism all packed into a washer and tumbling over each other, Stephen Frears' second film endures as one of the most beautiful and ungainly feel-good movies to ever emerge from the British film industry. *My Beautiful Laundrette* ostensibly centres around a young British Pakistani named Omar (Gordon Warnecke) whose meagre south London existence is devoted to caring for his invalid father. Omar's uncle, on the other hand, has churned an entrepreneurial zeal into a string of successful businesses, becoming a valuable part of the local community as a result. When Omar is tasked with refurbishing his uncle's dump of a laundromat, the ambitious kid shines to the idea, and his enthusiasm is only further inflated when a chance encounter with his old boyfriend Johnny (Daniel Day-Lewis) scores him his first employee.

Under-lit and shot on a 16mm stock that enhances the film's sense of hard luck opportunism, Frears' breakthrough is a mess of different tones that only stays afloat because it maintains such a comprehensive sense of the community at its heart. Despite a ubiquitous threat of violence that emanates from the both the past and future in equal measure, *My Beautiful Laundrette* has moments of levity so light they feel genuinely perverse.

"I'm sick of hearing about these in between – people should make up their minds where they are," one character announces, overeager to dismiss the complexities of a growing polycultural society. But the film, which was in dire need of this shimmering Criterion Collection release, thrives in the space between, illustrating that the world is only what we're willing to make of it. **DAVID EHRLICH**



If it wasn't in  
black and white,  
people wouldn't  
necessarily recognise  
what an important  
picture it is.



**RETURNED**

Ethan Coen

The man who  
wasn't there

CANNES press  
Conference. 2000

# Cannes

The *LWLies* team highlights five of the lesser-seen gems from the 68th Cannes Film Festival.

## 1 The Here After

Cannes may primarily serve as a lavish battle arena for an elite batch of auteur powerhouses, but it's also a great place for discovery – particularly in its Directors' Fortnight and Critics' Week sidebars. For our money the real find of this year's festival was first-time writer/director Magnus von Horn's *The Here After*, which centres around a rural Swedish community that's plunged into crisis following the reintroduction of a juvenile offender. Pop star-turned-actor Ulrik Munther (think Sweden's answer to Ed Sheeran) is quietly impressive as John, a troubled teen who returns home having served time for the manslaughter of a local girl. As well as providing a nuanced observation of inter-family relations in the wake of a traumatic event, the film explores the complex relationship between repentance and remission and how those who commit crimes so often wind up serving their sentence outside of the judicial system. **AW**

## 2 Rams

Continuing with the theme of family rifts and warring townfolk, director Grímur Hákonarson became the first Icelander to win an award at Cannes for his surefooted sheep-based comedy, *Rams*. Neighbouring farmers and brothers Gummi (Sigurður Sigurjónsson) and Kiddi (Theodór Júlíusson) haven't spoken in 40 years thanks to a bitter feud the root of which appears somewhat hazy to both. Despite this long-standing squabble, the indelible bond between these hirsute siblings starts showing signs of repair after they're forced to cull their flocks to prevent the spread of disease in the valley. Having pipped the likes of Apichatpong

Weerasethakul and Corneliu Porumboiu to the Un Certain Regard prize, you might be expecting something extra special from this wry ovine drama. But while it's certainly no masterpiece, at the very least Hákonarson proves he's got the human touch when it comes to storytelling on a modest scale. **AW**

## 3 Krisha

If the fascinating, counter-intuitive human problem of addiction is one that holds any interest, then debut director Trey Edward Shults' *Krisha*, is one for you to watch. The power of its perceptiveness sneaks up between the throng of domestic routines as we watch sixtysomething Krisha attempting to resettle into her family nest. She has nervously come to a house bustling with relatives to celebrate Thanksgiving. If the nest is barbed in places then there are historical reasons why. Shults, in his capacity as writer/director and actor, deals out a range of perspectives in pivotal conversations and climaxes. The most touching element of *Krisha*'s production is that it is one big family affair, from the shared ordeal of living with alcoholics all the way to the unified creative vision necessary to make this film. Group reconciliation to trauma has yielded a blunt but compassionate vision of the rarefied suffering that preys upon addicts and those that love them. **SMK**


## 4 Beyond My Grandfather Allende

Few documentarians have their stories as epically inter-spliced with the history of a nation as Marcia Tambutti Allende. Her grandfather was Salvador Allende, the democratically

elected Chilean president who committed suicide during General Pinochet's military coup in 1973. His wife and family fled into exile, growing up across different South American boltholes until the military regime ended in 1990. What gives Allende's documentary a fresh tone is the casual, conversational approach she takes to uncovering the memories of her sprawling family. Some tell her to back off to protect each other from remembering pain. The ethical integrity of forcing loved ones to relive trauma emerges as a dilemma, particularly as she questions her grandmother, Salvador Allende's widow, Tencha – a beautiful ninetysomething stoic whose sorrows extend beyond political lines into her marriage. Marcia Tambutti Allende's tenacity is redeemed as the power of keeping a record of the past adds up to stirring familial and theoretical effect. **SMK**

## 5 Hitchcock/Truffaut

The book 'Hitchcock/Truffaut' is often thought of as a cinephile holy grail, with the Nouvelle Vague upstart François Truffaut putting a late-career Hitch through his intellectual paces. The volume's greatness derives not only from the candidness of the testimonies, but from its celebration of filmmakers as the greatest analysts of their own work. Writer, critic and programmer Kent Jones hauls in some of modern cinema's top (male) filmmakers – David Fincher, Wes Anderson, Olivier Assayas, James Gray, et al – to genuflect towards Hitchcock and his work, and in doing so, creates another great work showing filmmakers themselves talking hyper-articulately, passionately and amusingly about movies, their construction and their meaning. It's a filmmaker profile doc which manages to transcend its humble roots to become something more – a movie about how we read movies. **DJ**

<h1>Jumpin' Jack Flash</h1>		
- DIRECTED BY -	- STARRING -	
Penny Marshall	Whoopi Goldberg, Jonathan Pryce, Jeroen Krabbé	
- TRAILERS -	- CHERRYPICK -	
The Reality Inspectors, Murder by Suicide, Canteloupe Island, The Pensky File, Der Mannschlänger	“Dogs barking can’t fly without umbrella!”	
- TAGLINE -		- RELEASED -
‘A man named Jack has got her Jumpin’ and the world may never be the same!’		1986

Some guy calling himself Jumping Jack Flash taps into my computer console and tells me I gotta go to his apartment, steal a frying pan and call Van Morrison.” Don’t worry, Whoopi – we’ve all had days like that. You accidentally get stuck chatting with the nutter on the bus. You leave your card in the machine. Your boss chews you out for coming to work smelling like “a brewery in a zoo.” Weekends sat on park benches waiting for the dim, cyan buzz of Monday morning to roll around. Finding yourself breaking into a stranger’s house and attempting to remotely communicate with rock stars through items of household cookwear. It happens.

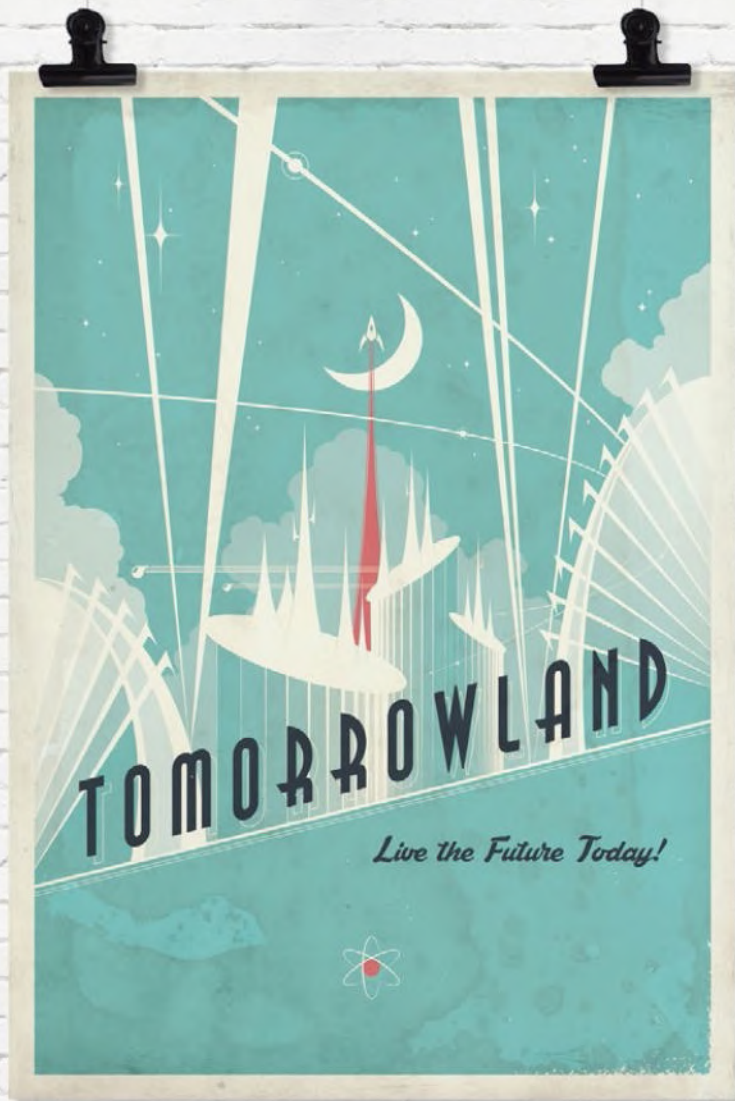
Yes, it’s hard to be sane in the city. The corrosive loneliness, breakneck pace and insurmountable social ladders of ’80s New York have clearly overwhelmed poor Whoopi Goldberg’s psychic defences before Penny Marshall’s outwardly comic study of the pathology of outsiderdom even gets off the starting blocks. A credit sequence trawl through Whoopi’s apartment sets alarm bells to standby. Looking like the evidence room of the *Sesame Street* police station after an earthquake, the best you can say is that *Jumpin’ Jack Flash* contains a certain childlike vitality. Giant toothbrushes battle with gumball machines for what is clearly an unformed soul, but what is life without a little girlish eccentricity? No, the full break from reality occurs – as it does for so many of us – at work.

Not imagining for a second that it might be a prank by one of her snickering workmates, Whoopi charges into an extended proto-email exchange with the mysterious Jack Flash. After assiduously sifting through the lyrics to the film’s title song for clues as to his identity (note: this consists of about 20 minutes of her rewinding a cassette tape), she eventually abandons this system in favour of an early-’80s

technique known as ‘guessing’ (another 15 minutes). We are witnessing the first gloopy droplets of a total mental mudslide, the extent of which becomes clear when her computer starts telling her what to do in the voice of Jonathan Pryce, he whose sanity-barrel disappeared so spectacularly over the falls at the end of 1985’s *Brazil*.

He instructs her to break into the British Consulate wearing in a Union Jack boob-tube and a Tina Turner fright wig, to attend a strangers’ funerals dressed as “a baseball man,” and to fight a Rabbi in a phonebooth. One is strangely reminded of the reported antics of Lee Harvey Oswald in the weeks prior to President Kennedy’s assassination, ranting on street corners and ostentatiously visiting various foreign embassies. Similarly fractured, Whoopi is throwing herself from moving vehicles, harassing paraplegics, lobbying a Latino streetgang to serve as their sexual piñata, all the while fantasising about killing Jim Belushi – the President of Pratfalls. And it’s a gas, gas, gas.

Just as lone nutbucket John Hinckley was inspired by the film *Taxi Driver* to take potshots at President Ronald Reagan, so is it that *Jumpin’ Jack Flash* draws its wellspring of comic cues from the murder of John Lennon. The punishing repetition of the Rolling Stones track is surely intended as a minatory reference to Lennon-assassin Mark Chapman’s dark obsession with the Beatles song ‘Revolution 9’. Whoopi’s vain attempts to contact Van Morrison – another famously grumpy British rock aristocrat – are thus revealed to be the distorted projection of a mind unfit for the intricate turbulences and mystifying reversals of adult life – a theme director Marshall would follow to its macabre conclusion in her next film, *Big*. When the real-life Jonathan Pryce is finally wheeled out in a bid to dampen Whoopi’s blunted fury, he looks very scared indeed. He has every reason to be 🍄



# Disney's Tomorrowland A World Beyond

**Creative Brief Winner: Nick Caldwell**

To celebrate the release of Brad Bird's *Tomorrowland A World Beyond* – *LWLies'* issue 59 cover film – we asked our readers to design a tourist poster inviting people to visit the film's futuro utopia.

The winner of the top prize, as selected by Bird himself, was Nick Caldwell, whose brilliant artwork is featured above.

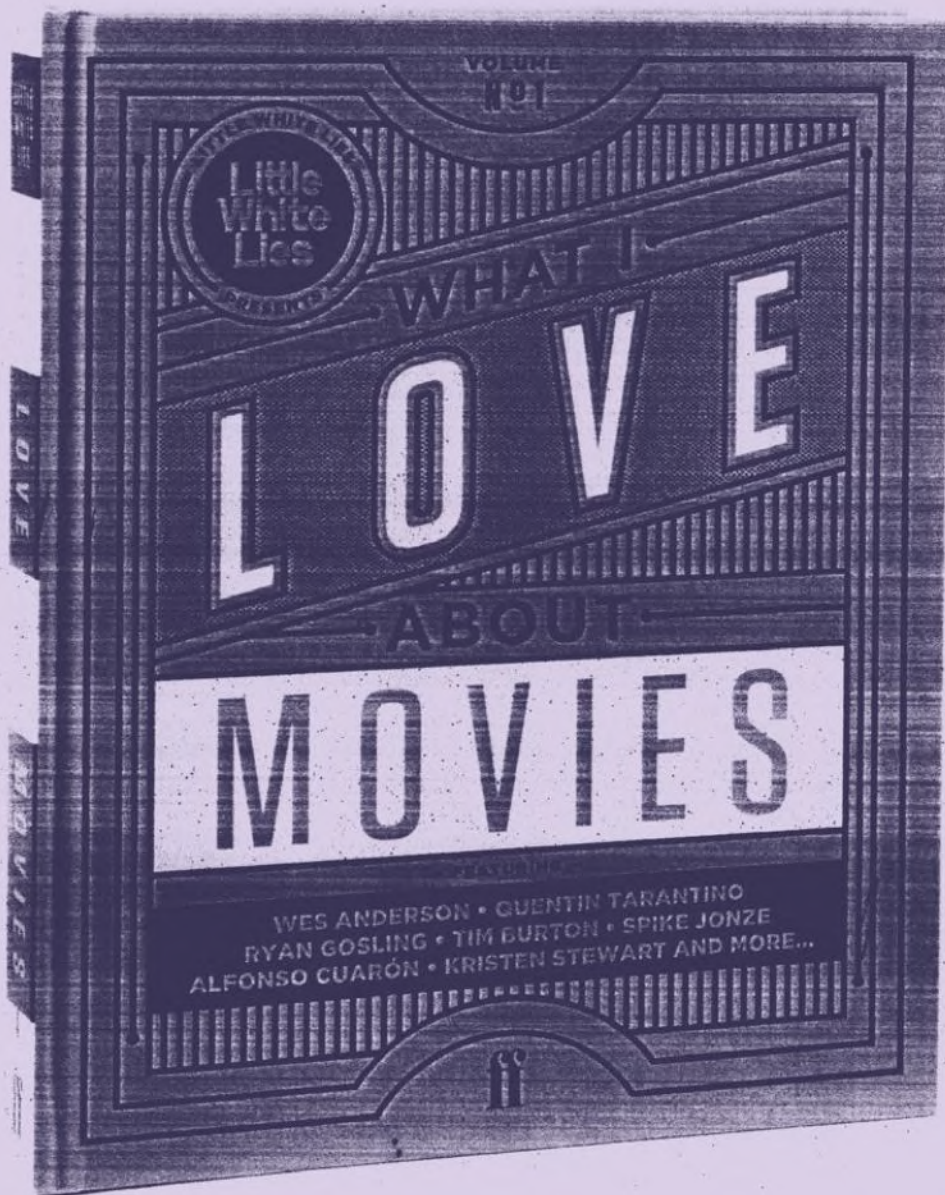
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The Sunday Times

**David Jenkins**  
Editor  
david@tcolondon.com



First album  
**Split by Lush**  
First band  
**Black Will Slaughter and the Pillows**  
End of the DJ set track  
**Rude by Magic**

**Adam Woodward**  
Deputy Editor  
adam@tcolondon.com



First album  
**The Colour & the Shape by Foo Fighters**  
First band  
**Somewhere in September**  
End of the DJ set track  
**Purple Rain**

**Timba Smits**  
Art Director  
timba@tcolondon.com



First album  
**Play by Moby**  
First band  
**The Fourteen Errol's**  
End of the DJ set track **You Could Be Loved (remix) - Damian Marley**

Words, pictures, thanks  
**Abbey Bender**  
**Anton Bitel**  
**Ela Bittencourt**  
**Ashley Clark**  
**Jordan Cronk**  
**Adam Lee Davies**  
**Rebecca Ellis**  
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**Nick Pinkerton**  
**Kiva Reardon**  
**Vadim Rizov**  
**Justine Smith**

**Sophie Monks Kaufman**  
Staff Writer  
sophie@tcolondon.com



First album  
**The Great Escape by Blur**  
First band: **still stuck in R&I**  
End of the DJ set track  
**I feel love by Donna Summer**

**David Ehrlich**  
Editor at Large (US)  
daveide@tcolondon.com



First album  
**Storm Front by Billy Joel's**  
First band  
**U3**  
End of the DJ set track  
**Pluto by Björk's**

**Lauren Boglio**  
Designer  
laurene@tcolondon.com



First album  
**The Return of the Space Cowboy by Jamiroquai**  
First band  
**La Femme à barbe**  
End of the DJ set track  
**Tonton du Bled by 113**

Cover illustration by  
**Timba Smits**  
Act Pages illustration by  
**Jose Miguel Mendez**

Publisher  
**Vince Medeiros**

**Oliver Stafford**  
Designer  
oliver@tcolondon.com



First album  
**Your Favourite Weapon by Brand New**  
First band: **Understatement**  
End of the DJ set track  
**(Get A) Grip (On Yourself) by The Stranglers**

**Bindi Kaufmann**  
Account Director  
bindi@tcolondon.com



First album  
**Always & Forever by Eternal**  
First band  
**The Subtle Bitches**  
End of the DJ set track  
**96 Tears by Question Mark & The Mysterians**

**George Jennings**  
Media Sales Executive  
george@tcolondon.com



First album  
**2001 by Dr Dre (Censored version)**  
First band  
**The Pork Pies**  
End of the DJ set track  
**I Wanna Be Your Lover by Prince**

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# the wonders

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# CHEEKY

11PM ----- 11AM

14 AUG, PUKKALAND, LEICESTER SQUARE  
£10 ON THE DOOR, FIVES BEFORE 1AM

**DRESS 2 IMPRESS**  
**NO TRAINERS**  
**NO CAPS**

TOMMY  
FIRED  
ENRIQUE  
MICKY 'A

## BIS

MAIL  
ORDER  
ONLY

WHITE LABEL  
TAPE  
COMPILASHUN

# DANCE

# 2

THA MAX  
VOL 8.

DJ  
JONAT'AN  
FRANKS

HAND-  
PICKED  
BY

Cramped Badger Media presents

# BEYOND THE

# FE

LWLIES : What do you love about movies?

**MIA HANSEN-LØVE:** What I love about movies is the feeling that... somebody made them. That's why I don't watch TV series, because I never get the feeling that it's one person speaking to me. What makes me want to see a film is the feeling that I'm meeting someone. Who is on the other side of this film? Who is talking to me? The question of style and form is part of it of course, but it's not too much about the surface for me. Ultimately what I enjoy about film is the idea of meeting somebody who is unique. The filmmakers who are important to me are the ones I can feel physically. When I don't feel the person... or when I feel the person but don't like the person, then I wouldn't like the film. Film is meeting a person, and liking them too.

Laine

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rus  
nz')

ills

ccine  
(rphanage')

digging up  
lug on the Time  
e Fowler  
he Chill-out Cube

Special Appearances by

**DJ Silly Fucker**  
(Lineker's Lounge, Ibiza)

**MC Sheila Blige**  
(Climaxxx FM)

**Combat 18**

Meet up Spot

Pump 4 of the Esso Garage,  
Heston Services, M4  
(south side)

14 JULY

# ELYSIUM

RUISLIP LIDO

9PM TO 9AM



# OR BUST

- CAUSEWAY 2 THE HEAVENS -

AUDIENCE CALLOUT  
ITV'S...

## THE HIT MAN & HER

8 AUGUST, 7PM @ EROS NIGHTCLUB, ENFIELD

NO TEAM COLOURS

OLLIE NORTON-COX PRESENTS

## SUN RAZE

13 AUGUST

BAB JUICE | HOKEY-COKEY | KRAVE |  
BICARBON-8 | LIPSTICK THESPIANS |  
TIPP-EX ENEMA | TOM'S MIDNIGHT  
GARDEN | LOU FERRIGNO (TV'S "THE  
HULK") DJ SET | CLAMMY | TOUR DE  
FORCE | HERBIE SMOKES BANANAS |  
DEATH PENALTY |

CHILL ZONE  
SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY | SHINGLE  
| CARDIGAN BAY | SPONGEBATH | RADIO FREE  
DUNGENESS | - NORMSKI PA

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MEDICS

\*Taps will be blocked for safety reasons.

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